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# FOREIGN DEVIL

An American Kim in Modern Asia

by Gordon Enders

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# 1

I stood beside Jowar Singh in comparative shade and watched. The Grand Trunk Road, down which Kim so familiarly vagabonded, was thronged with the vivid life of India, drawn there by the lodestone of the winter cattle fair. Jugglers and tumblers, Punch-and-Judy shows, beggars and holy men, blind men and mad men, widows, prostitutes, and baby brides, moved together in a sweating, holiday crowd.

The gray dust rose in a cloud between the straight lines of trees which bordered the Road, and the hot sun ripped through in long, slanting bars. Barefooted farmers and their families dog-trotted on the edges, dodging the herds of cattle and the lines of laden camels which followed one another nose to tail, and in the center slow and heavy bullock carts whined, axles innocent of oil. The air was filled with the shouted commands of the drivers who sat between their white oxen like bronze images in loin cloths.



Weaving in and out of the slower traffic ran the ekkas, two-wheeled traps with gay awnings, and their reckless passage, the bells on their ponies, and the endless vituperations of their occupants added to the stifling cacophony. To top it all, a wedding procession had tangled itself in the shouting and the good-natured backchat. Skirting this chaos, brown, naked, silent, a small boy ambled alone, chewing a stick of sugar cane, with anxious monkeys greedily hopping from limb to tree limb above him.

From the neighboring, shimmering plain, winding in and out among the clumps of pipal trees and thorny plum bushes, came hundreds of cattle momentarily swelling the river of life which swirled toward the distant fair grounds. They were the high-humped, wide-horned variety, with heavy, silken dewlaps, mostly light browns and white. Naked boys helped their fathers and big brothers to keep the herds together, but many calves lost their mothers, who turned aside to hunt them. Into the vast confusion plunged the sacred bulls, those spoiled males reared in the temples, whose function is to fertilize and increase the herds. And everywhere in the fields bordering the Grand Trunk Road lay the skeletons of underfed beasts which had been overdriven by their anxious owners. Their still-fresh bones showed the midnight work of the jackals who followed the campfire of the drovers.

Jowar Singh and I were standing in front of the thick mango grove which edged the Road. Jowar Singh was our number-one servant, a high-caste Hindu, a hillman from the

kingdom of Tiri whose high mountains jut into Forbidden Tibet on the southwest. He was swarthy and handsome, more than six feet tall, with the deep chest and slim legs of a runner, flashing black eyes and good teeth. His towering turban was white, his knee-length coat was blue, set off by a red cummerbund; and his shoes were green with swagger, upturned toes. But the most remarkable part of Jowar Singh's appearance was his rust-red hair and his auburn mustache.

The mango grove was a busy place, surrounded by mud walls overgrown with cactus and bamboo. Against the inside of the walls were many little fireplaces, hollowed out by travelers, each encircled by a smoothed and hard-packed area—the private dining-room-kitchens of caste-ridden Hindustan.

In the heart of the grove some pious Hindu, years before, had dug a well, either to gain merit or to expiate a sin, and now some thirty families had dropped out of the traffic to draw cool water in their graceful brass lotas—those teapot-sized vessels for drawing water, without which no Indian family travels. Beside the well they drank and washed, breaking twigs from the bitter neem tree for toothbrushes. Each chewed his twig's end until it was stiff and fibrous, and then used it to make his white teeth shine.

Jowaru—my name for him; a diminutive like our Charlie for Charles—called my attention to a family who had maneuvered their small herd of cattle out of the traffic toward a field adjoining our grove, a father and mother, two young

boys, and a fat baby who straddled his mother's hip. The father and older boys carried bamboo staves with which to drive their animals.

The two adults, with the baby still astride its mother's hip, turned into the grove. Not far from where we stood, the father unwound his turban and spread it upon the ground. It had once been white and was almost the shape and size of a big bed sheet. He took the baby from its mother and motioned the woman to sit down.

She had a yellow chuddar, like a cotton shawl, thrown over head and shoulders and pulled down over her face, so that I could not guess her age or see what manner of woman she was. But when she relinquished the baby it was obvious why she had stopped: she was far gone in pregnancy.

Patiently she squatted on her heels, peeking out from behind her chuddar at the women who drew water and washed at the well. She clutched her hands around her throat, and I could see the dozens of glass and silver bracelets on her wrists and the blue tattoo marks on the back of her hands. Her fingers were covered with cheap rings, and along the tops of her bare feet ran lines of silver chains which joined her tinkling, peanut-shaped toe rings. She had gathered her full red skirt beneath her and from time to time moved convulsively. But she made no sound.

Matters presently became urgent, and the father put the fat baby down to play with the ants which scuttled over the ground. He asked a question of his wife, and I heard the bangles on her wrists tinkle when she pointed toward the well. He hurried across the grove, filled his lota full of water,

and stopped to question the women—their faces were covered—who washed and chattered near by. Because of the caste system of India, he might not ask a woman of higher caste to help his wife, nor would he accept the services of a woman of lesser caste. Eventually he found a suitable helper and brought her over to his wife.

Surrounded by people, within earshot of the chaos on the Grand Trunk Road, the Hindu mother turned to a total stranger for the most private and mysterious function of the human race. She had the corner of a soiled turban, less than a quart of cold water, a stolid husband, and an unknown woman to assist her in bringing a new baby into the world.

While the dust-laden sunlight filtered through the mango trees, the mother struggled. Her body arched crazily at times, and her bangles sounded like sudden bells. The father got to his feet and walked about, then squatted down to join the strange woman in encouraging his wife.

Slowly, ever so slowly, before my fascinated eyes, the baby came. The strange woman held, and turned, and helped it. The mother made no sound except to gasp: "Yes! Yes! Yes!" at breathless intervals.

Even before the birth was fully accomplished, the assisting woman, her face now showing through her disheveled chuddar, proudly announced a son; a man-child to grow up to drive his father's cattle, to marry and have sons of his own. The mother nodded her head, caught her breath, and nodded again.

Then the little fellow was born—all pink and gold and black. I watched him become a separate entity. With quick

movements, a large knot was made at his navel, and it became clear to me why little bumps of flesh protruded from the middles of so many naked Indian children. The mother was quit, now, of her child, but not of her pains. Nor did the baby breathe yet.

For a moment the midwife abandoned the mother. Grasping the new child by his heels, she stood up and shook him as a terrier would a rat, banging him over the shoulder blades. She called to the women at the well, and the baby gasped his first breath before an appreciative audience.

The baby's cries had been too much for me, and I joined the group openly. Several women hurriedly investigated the little fireplaces, and one came back with a double handful of the white ashes of cow dung to give the baby his first bath. They doused him with water, and he made full-throated protest. Then they smeared him with the white ashes and began to rub him down as sailors holystone a deck. He objected lustily, which made the women laugh and rub the harder. And saying that he would be a great warrior, the father of hosts of sons, and the head of his village, they scrubbed him until he was nearly frantic with rebellion. At last they dried him and laved him with sweet cooking oil, and between whimpers his little mouth began to water.

The women wrapped him in dry cloths and passed him around for admiration. Catching sight of me, they asked whether I had looked like that, and I retorted that white babies did not look like that when they were born. They laughed and fell to examining the baby's face again, saying it must be like that of his grandfather, or his uncle, or perhaps

his little dead brother. For to them a new life was not new, it was merely a disguise for an old life, for the world return of a familiar spirit.

Standing with my hand in Jowar Singh's, with the sounds of the Grank Trunk Road in my ears, I was half convinced, so real and commonplace was their talk.

I looked closely at the little child and saw something which still challenges my imagination.

Babies, in the Orient, are born old.

Early the next morning, when Jowaru and I went out to look, the mother and her baby were gone. The grove was peopled with new wayfarers, hastening toward the cattle fair, and all our searching failed to reveal another glimpse of the little, ancient boy I had seen born.

Instead, with my brother Bob and my sister Miriam, I watched the mendicant jewelers making bangles and bright rings out of the molten glass of their braziers. Another day we witnessed the making of *jalebis*, which are like our pretzels in shape, but boiled in thick honey. We also knew the other sweetmeats, made from poppy seed, the milk of camels and donkeys, and flavored with cloying attar of roses.

So far as I know, there are only two confections in India which are made of pure sugar. One is the *batasa*—a white sugar drop, faintly flavored with attar of roses, and probably blown up by being dropped in deep fat. The other is *burriaki bal*, which means "old woman's hair," and is fine-spun white sugar candy, accurately described by its name. All other candies contain flour and usually seeds of some kind.

The parasitic holy men of India, the yogi and fakir, were everywhere; some of them naked except for loincloths, their bodies smeared with ashes and their foreheads bright with the marks of Siva, Ganesa, and Krishna—the gods of Hinduism. We watched the holy Gonds of Central India, who stood on one foot or hung upside down from trees by the hour. There were also unclothed devotees who lay on benches of sharp nails, and those who held arms or legs in one position until the members withered.

One of these had become a great friend of ours. He had held his arm over his head until it had atrophied. But in closing his withered fist, he had doubled his thumb into the palm of his hand. Now the thumbnail grew through the palm and stuck out at the back. My missionary father went to the local British Civil Surgeon about returning the fellow's arm to normal and received assurances that it might be done. But the fakir preferred his easy living and would have no surgery.

Another holy man had tied his fingers tightly with wire until gangrene set in, closely resembling leprosy. But nothing would induce him to stop the damage while the coppers continued falling onto the dirty white sheet spread before him. It was a rich harvest these dronelike holy men reaped at the cattle fair.

When the hot winds began to blow and the brain-fever bird called all night, the fair broke up. To our house, hidden from the Grand Trunk Road behind thick oleanders, jasmine, and marigolds, came the departing jugglers and acrobats. For a few coppers we saw the black Himalayan bear do his dances and listened to the Indian version of Punch and

Judy—the owner reciting the legends, while his two monkeys, in bright, human clothing, acted out the drama.

The jugglers of India base most of their tricks on the substitution of one thing for another. As they are bare to the waist and their loincloths do not have pockets, they must fall back on nature. From babyhood, the jugglers make their children stretch the pouches under their tongues with marbles—and finally with hen's eggs. It is amazing how large these pouches become, and what a miscellany of articles a juggler can keep in them. Every time he licks his thumb, he makes his substitutions.

The entertainers squatted beside their baskets in the dust of our driveway, while we watched from the shade of the veranda. We saw the mango tree growing under the juggler's widespread turban; we saw one man eat fire, and another swallow knives—we saw almost everything.

But my father saw something which was neither magic nor illusion. He saw the coming ruthless audit of nature. The surplus of seven fat years was more than equaled by the automatic increase in baby mouths. The hot winds were already blowing up dust devils along the Grand Trunk Road, so that the leaves of the trees that lined it were white. The season of festivals approached, and after that India faced the months of scorching heat until the monsoons burst and brought the earth to life again.

When the British government added up the sum of new and old mouths to feed, the total seriously overbalanced the available food. Prices began to climb, and biers moved down the Grand Trunk Road to the chant of "There is no true god



but Ram!" All through the hot nights came the wail of conch shells from the city temples. The tired earth—scraped and drained for thirty centuries—had not been able to keep up with the increase.

For that one baby I had seen born in a mango grove, there were a million others—born without forethought, plan, or preparation. India would have to pay.

"What will be will be," they said, adding, "Nothing for nothing in this world. For every life—a death!"

## 2

MY FATHER was a Pennsylvania farm boy turned Presbyterian missionary. Born in the springhouse of a farm near the village of Enders, he finished his formal education at fourteen and went to work on his father's land. He did not dislike farming, but he longed for a good education and a professional career. The Bible in German and English, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Milton, he read and reread. By the time he was sixteen, he was the teacher in the one-room school from which he had been graduated two years before. He had already made up his mind to study for the ministry.

When his father sold the farm and moved into Harrisburg to found a grocery business and a bank, he put in long days with letters, bills, inventories, and invoices. But his nights were filled with Latin, Hebrew, Greek; with history, literature, logic.

When he was twenty, he met a girl of sixteen who had come from California to visit relatives. She was Frances-

Marie Seibert, descended from Swiss and Huguenot dissenters, a diminutive, dark, and vivacious girl. Her energy and self-confidence appealed to the studious boy; Allen Enders and Frances-Marie Seibert fell in love because they were so unlike.

The ambitious farm boy was absent-minded and impractical. Frances-Marie was forthright and practical; problems dissolved for her in bustle and activity. When she fell in love with Allen, she approved his program and laid out a campaign for its achievement. And when his family said he was too young to support a bride, she suggested elopement. So they ran away and were married, and both families washed their hands of bride and groom.

Then began the Oatmeal Era. The bride set up housekeeping in a single room, and the groom took a job as a shoe clerk. They lived almost entirely on oatmeal, which is cheap, nutritious, and of satisfying bulk in hungry young stomachs. In the evening, and late into the night, Allen studied, while Frances-Marie heard him recite his new knowledge. In this way he passed his examinations for entrance to the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Omaha, Nebraska. There stretched ahead a prospect of three years of study—and oatmeal.

By the second year, however, matters eased up. Father was much in demand to fill vacant country pulpits. He had a gift for music, as well as speaking, and could play any conventional instrument. Piano, organ, and cornet he played by note—and others by ear. I've seen him pick up an Indian sitar, with its seven strings, strum on it for a few minutes, and

then play like a veteran. The Indian flute, even the snake charmer's pipe, presented no difficulties.

When he was ordained, his first offer of a post came from the familiar southwest corner of Iowa which lies near Omaha, and in the early 1890's Father became a circuit rider for the towns of Rolfe, Essex, and Hamburg, small hamlets lying in a prosperous corn and dairy country.

As soon as he was established, he and Mother were forgiven for their elopement. And when we three children were born Father's future promised to be both commonplace and predictable. But a seminary classmate of Father's had gone to India as a missionary, and frequent letters turned the circuit rider's thoughts toward the East. In time he added Sanskrit and Arabic, the written alphabets of Hindustan, to his studies.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Father immediately applied for enlistment as a chaplain and was refused because he was the father of a young family. But he had adjusted himself to the idea of a change, and since this one was not forthcoming, he applied for a missionary post in India. That application was promptly accepted.

While Dewey's dash for Manila Bay was thrilling America, Father embarked with his family on a cattle steamer for Liverpool and, by transshipment, for Bombay on an Anchor Liner. He watched over a huge pile of reference books and paced the deck, looking for anyone who could tell him of Hindustan, while Mother guarded the children, the tickets, the money, and the passports.

In the harbor at Bombay there was an American battle-

ship. When we saw the flag we cheered, and the sailors responded lustily. It was our last salute to America for years to come. With the sound of it still in our ears, we took the train and plunged into teeming, brown-skinned Hindustan.

After leaving the railway more than six hundred miles up-country, we reached our bungalow by traveling all night in a double-decked cart, drawn by an aromatic and grumbling camel. We tried to sleep by stretching out on the upper deck, while the servants and the baggage crowded in below. Early morning finally found us in our new home beside the Grand Trunk Road.

The compound stretched for nearly a quarter of a mile along the road, extending back from it irregularly for an equal distance. Behind it was the flat and grassy expanse of an abandoned polo field, an echo of the days when British troops garrisoned the city. Except on the polo-field side, low mud walls, thick and tapering toward the rounded tops, cut us off from the outside world. Bamboo clumps screened us from the road, and acacia, banana, mango, palm, lime, and lemon trees dotted the entire enclosure.

Our bungalow stood back a hundred yards from the Road and was built so that it showed its side veranda to the world. The real entrance was toward the porte-cochere under which the winding driveway ran. At the back was an ell-shaped group of smaller buildings which comprised the kitchen and servants' quarters. Far over in the corner of the compound were the stables and the homes of those who tended our horses, goats, cattle, and camel.

Without waiting to inspect the empty bungalow, Father

bicycled to the city two miles away, in search of native tutors who would drill him for the next three years in the history, speech, and customs of India. But for Mother, house-keeping began without delay.

In our little colony of six scattered bungalows there were a missionary family and several wives of British Civil Servants to give advice, but there were a thousand matters to adjust to individual needs. The required servants amounted to a small army; their training was a problem for a War College, and their handling would have stretched the capacities of a Board of Strategy. Mother, with scarcely a word of the language, handled the servant question with the aplomb of a Chief of Staff. She hired Jowar Singh, a cook, a nursemaid, a watchman, a sweeper, a water carrier, a gardener, and a messenger. Later, when Father decided to keep cows and horses, two grasscuts, a groom, and a dairyman were added. Each man had his family, and this numerous following promptly moved into the servants' quarters behind the house.

Mother first hired Jowar Singh, who spoke a few words of English. She took him largely on faith. He was very young—which was a recommendation—and his smile was infectious.

It was not until later that we discovered the facts of Jowar Singh's life: that his hill-girl wife had run away with another man; that he had a blind father and six brothers who were searching the mountains to kill the unfaithful bride and her lover; that Jowaru had fled to the plains of India to forget his sorrows, and had only recently taken up with the brazen plainswoman whom he passed off as his wife.

As our number-one servant, Jowaru's first duty was to

hire the other servants, to bring them in for Mother's approval, and to accept responsibility for them. Of all the servants he brought us, only our watchman, Durga, lasted during the five years we lived on the plains. The others were replaced for everything from talking too much to wife stealing. But Durga stayed because he was a member of the Thief Caste and was consequently avoided by the others. Durga shared his monthly pay of about a dollar with the members of his caste, thus buying immunity for his American employers. A small, skinny man with a tremendous voice, he made three or four circuits of the house during the night, coughing lugubriously in a hollow bass, to let us know he guarded us and our property. It was quite unnecessary, but it looked well.

Jowaru's worst failure was in the choice of our nurse, whose name was Deborah. She was an old woman, toothless, white-haired, garrulous, and half blind. She meant well, but her groping fingers pinched when she unbuttoned clothes, and her endlessly repeated story of how the guns boomed during the Indian Mutiny soon palled on the three little Foreign Devils she managed. Her status was changed to that of personal maid for Mother and my sister Miriam; and Jowar Singh, in addition to his other duties, took on the job of nurse to Bob and me.

His fingers did not pinch, except when we wouldn't stand still, and his stories flowed on like the *Arabian Nights*. He told us why the idols stood in a row on the river bank, why the hyena laughs like a human being, and where there is a sword which runs with blood whenever a loved one is in

danger. From the very start Jowaru won the hearts of Bob and me, and our parents, always busy from morning to night, were delighted to leave us in charge of someone so successful with us, and so conscientious. The India of our early childhood had Jowar Singh for its center, and it was a mysterious and incomprehensible place, except where it was lighted by his confident knowledge.

To Jowaru's Oriental thinking, I was the elder son, and the next head of my family, so it was his duty to prevent my growing up in ignorance of Hindustan and the ways of its peoples. Long before I understood what was happening, he constituted himself my guru, or teacher, in all matters pertaining to native India. (I'm afraid Bob was sometimes a bit slighted by him, and Miriam even more so.) I became as much a chela, or disciple, as any barefooted native boy who carried the begging bowl of a red-robed guru. It was a relationship well established in the Orient, and one which would still hold if I were in Hindustan today—though Jowar Singh is head dairyman at an English hotel in the mountains, and I have become an intimate friend and adviser of the exalted Grand Lama of Tibet. Only the death of one of us can lift the obligation.

So it happened that Jowaru was the first clear window through which I could peer for some sort of understanding of the dark mystery which is Hindustan.

Our family life took its pattern from the Anglo-Indian habits which had crystallized after two hundred years of experience. The house was furnished in the foreign style,



and our food was a faithful imitation by our cook of "home-side" meals.

The routine of eating, however, was somewhat different. Jowaru carried trays into our bedrooms at seven in the morning, a small breakfast, which consisted of fruit, tea, toast, and jam. We ate in bed and dressed immediately afterward. At ten-thirty came big breakfast: oatmeal, eggs, coffee, and all the trimmings, served in the dining room. Tiffin, or lunch, was at two-thirty and was rather sketchy—usually a light dish, fruit, and a cold drink, such as milk or unfrozen sherbet. About five o'clock Jowaru set out tea on a cement platform in the flower garden, and it was conventional with toast, jam, and cakes. After dark, usually at eight, came the big meal of the day—dinner, an affair of courses, including soup and dessert.

The only servant permitted by decorum to serve food was Jowar Singh. It was he, too, who laid out clean clothes, changed stud buttons, answered the front door, and responded to our calls. He alone was permitted to make beds, bring lights, and advise on household matters. Like all the lesser servants, Jowaru kept his turban on in the house, but slipped off his green slippers before stepping over our threshold. He received four dollars a month—without food—for this; but the other servants received amounts as low as sixty-six cents a month. Yet Mother paid the accepted scale, even leaning toward generosity in many cases.

Although we were surrounded by servants, our life in many respects was primitive and pioneering. We had no running water, no electric lights; we had no butchers, grocers,

or bakers; no drugstores or clothing stores, and no ice company. Our staples came from America, supplied by Montgomery, Ward & Co: sugar, bacon, coffee, shoes, and clothes, drugs and hardware. From Ginn and Company, D. C. Heath, and Perry we got books and pictures.

Mother instituted home baking and the canning of fruits to offset the absence of bakers and grocers. Father made up our lack of butcher shops by shooting for the pot. We could bag peafowl, pigeons, and partridges without leaving our compound. In the near-by swamps we found hosts of geese, ducks, and curlew. On the plains were deer and the big blue bucks, and in the fields of sugar cane and pulse the wild boar was easy to shoot after dark.

When it grew too hot for hunting, Father fattened goats and sheep with feeding formulas learned in Pennsylvania. Our cook butchered them in native fashion, muttering to himself, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet!" Because we had no ice, Mother corned and preserved the haunches; the rest she fed to her family, to her white neighbors, and to her native invalids (of which she always nursed an army), before it could spoil.

I shot my first bird on my seventh birthday, and the gun kicked me clear across the veranda, but it was the beginning of my hunting career. Bob began hunting at about the same age, and still hunts occasionally in the jungles of Central America for the zoological specimens he needs in his work at Swarthmore College. But Miriam once came upon the cook butchering a goat and was so badly shocked that for two years she was a strict vegetarian.

While Father studied and Mother ran the household, we children took up life in India without conscious effort. We were too young to remember southwest Iowa for long. Before we knew it, we were speaking Hindustani, and outside the house we were learning to think like Indians.

More than that, we were learning that basically there was no difference between us, that the people of the East are like the people of the West. Once the surface barrier of language was down and the strangeness of custom understood, there was no alienness of spirit to overcome. Children know this. They can recognize men of good will wherever they encounter them. They know that the important thing is the similarities among people. That the unfamiliar things cease to be barriers once they are comprehended.

### 3

LOOKING BACK, I realize that the India of my childhood was at once as ancient as time and as young as the world of Alexander the Great. It was a teeming brown mass of humanity, but it was not a nation; it was rent by dozens of classes, creeds, and races. Poverty, famine, and disease were everywhere, and the overwhelming keynote of Indian existence was insecurity—even as it is today.

In some ways the India I saw, by means of the peephole which was Jowaru, was an ancient lesson for moderns. For India, in a sense, is totalitarianism gone to seed. The caste system is what happens to a dictatorship when it is old and tired, and the dictatorship of India is that of its corrupt priesthood.

During that summer when the brain-fever bird made the nights a torment, when the temple conches screamed and the biers moved steadily down the Grand Trunk Road, Jowar Singh spent a great deal of time with me. With him I saw

the unfinished meal of a man-eating tiger, the river floating full of the victims of floods, the crows feasting on the severed head of a murdered boy, the burning of corpses. This is at best a gruesome procedure. The pyre is short, so the corpse is placed on it, face upward, with the shins and feet doubled under. When the fire burns, the pull of the doubled-under legs makes the corpse sit up in lifelike fashion. The attendants use their lathees (bamboo staves) to beat it down again.

Although he was possessed of a tender heart, Jowaru despised those of strange creeds and customs. He was of the proud warrior class, and his ancestors had been land-owners for generations. His comments were enlightening.

"Life is only for those strong enough to seize and hold it," he said, "and you have seen that there is too little for every man. Would you have good Hindus—tall hillmen like myself—relinquish it to others?"

"No," I said tentatively, "but—"

"There is no 'but,' " insisted Jowaru. "Either a man lives—or he dies. The Mohammedans are pigs, and the Hindus of the plains are fools. Now men like myself—"

It was clear, even to me, that India was at war with itself.

All that summer the brain-fever bird made the nights restless. He would start quietly on a tree beside the rooftop where we lay under white mosquito nets. "Brain-fev-er," he chirruped quietly in a high-pitched monotone—a quaver and two demiquavers, like fingers lightly drumming on the skull. The next call was slightly louder, and the next louder

still—mounting to a maddening crescendo that was like trip hammers on the head. His first call riveted the attention and it was impossible not to anticipate the full-throated climax which seemed to take centuries to reach.

At midnight the temperature stood anywhere between 98 and 103, and the hot wind played across the dried, burned plain, kicking up the white dust.

During the day our house was closed and darkened against the cloudless, incandescent sky. A deep veranda ran all around the one-story bungalow, whose mud walls were a good three feet thick. French doors opened from all the rooms onto the veranda, but each door stood ajar and the space was darkened by thick mats made from the roots of the khushkus grass, which is delightfully aromatic. While the sun shone, our water carrier made constant rounds, sprinkling the mats with cool well water. So the hot breezes coming into the darkened house were made sweet and gratifyingly cool.

On the veranda sat coolies pulling on ropes run through the thick walls, which swung back and forth wide-fringed punkahs hanging from the ceilings and reaching across the twilight rooms. Under the punkahs my sister, brother, and I studied in the early mornings and during the late afternoons. In the middle of the day we lay on our white beds, watching little lizards stalking the moths, mosquitoes, and flies which came into the coolness.

While we remained indoors, Father was away from the house almost all day. He had started his life in India as an evangelical minister, baptizing the heathen. Then he became

the principal of a missionary high school. He continued to preach on Sundays and to supervise the activities of the Christian workers who went out into the field, but teaching he found far more congenial, and hours after we were asleep at night, he sat on at his desk. In time he opened an industrial school for boys, in which they were taught various crafts and were equipped to earn a living.

When the grass burned down to its roots, the mud at the bottom of the ponds cracked and dried; and when the rivers turned to sluggish trickles, insufficient to carry away the half-consumed bodies from the burning ghats, the welcome monsoon began to blow. Up across the Indian ocean it roared, pushing before it thick black rain clouds. Nine hundred miles overland the rain sailed, and for days before its coming we could feel the change in the air. After many false promises, tantalizing with scatterings of big cool drops, the big rains deluged the thirsty earth.

The bamboo clumps which ringed the compound sprang into life, and we could hear the growth of the fat juicy shoots among the dried leaves of last year. The grass grew knee-high overnight, and the snake holes filled with water, driving cobras, kraits, and the harmless black snakes into the roadways and onto our veranda. But while it gave welcome relief from the naked sun, the rain came too late to revive the exhausted earth, and the coming of autumn brought no promise of relief for hungry mouths.

Before the famine came, however, our district celebrated its two biggest religious festivals. The population was equally divided between Hindus and Mohammedans, the

former the conquered, the latter the descendants of those Mogul legions who seized the land in the time of Tamerlane. The celebrations, therefore, were more than religious festivals; in them was the hatred of Hindu for Mohammedan, all the cold flame of fanaticism, burning the stronger for the impending threat of starvation.

My only Mohammedan friend (and I had few Hindu playmates: there was an almost unsurmountable barrier between foreign and native children) was named Masih Ulla. He was a tall boy with citified manners, who hid his Islamic zeal under a cloak of indifference. He was a soft-spoken and compliant playmate who often roamed the compound with Bob and me, looking for birds' nests, mongoose lairs, and snake holes. But with the coming of the Mohammedan festival of Muharram (or Ramadan) Masih Ulla changed beyond recognition.

For a month he complied with the Mohammedan law, eating only after sunset and before sunrise. Inevitably, the hot weather, the lack of sleep, and the constant preaching shortened his temper and made his eyes dry and red. The one-time innocent explorations in our compound became a serious matter for him during the festival, for he occupied his time in saving spiders and killing *girgitans*, a chameleon-like lizard.

Ramadan is in celebration of two Mohammedan martyrs, the brothers Hasan and Husain. One of them, to escape persecution, hid himself in the hollow log of a fallen tree where a friendly spider hastily spun a web over the end of his log. When his pursuers saw the web, they turned away to look



elsewhere. But lying along the low branch of a near-by tree was a lizard, which promptly faced toward the hollow log and moved its head up and down until the enemies investigated and dragged the martyr brother to his death.

For his campaign against the lizards, Masih Ulla carried a long bow, strung with two strings held apart by inch-long sticks. In the center stretched a leather sling into which he fitted marbles of sun-baked clay. The instrument was deadly to the unsuspecting lizards.

All during Ramadan, Masih Ulla's thoughts were with Hasan and Husain. As the days progressed, he helped to build tazias, huge paper and tinsel biers for the martyred brothers, which were to be taken out into the fields at the end of the feast and buried with beating of breasts and wails of mourning. For a day and a night the entire Mohammedan population would be stark, raving mad.

In the meanwhile, the Hindus were planning for their Ram Lila festival, which celebrates the bringing of fire to earth. Like Ramadan, Ram Lila is a movable feast, but in spite of government protests, both the Mohammedans and the Hindus planned to have them conflict. They were defiantly staged in the very shadow of impending famine.

Our whole family was invited to witness the Ram Lila from the cool and scented marquee of the Rajah of Jaswantnager. His two elephants were stabled at the edge of our compound and all his servants were friends of mine. Jowaru told me the Rajah was filled with pride over the arrival of an heir and the festival was to be magnificent.

Early in the morning we reached the marquee, and the

Rajah's uniformed servants, under Jowaru's supervision, served breakfast in the foreign style. Wreaths of jasmine were placed about our necks and the resplendent Rajah, an Oxford graduate, wore his richest satins and brightest gems. There were no women present, save for my mother and Miriam.

The marquee stood at the edge of a flat plain, under a grove of mangoes. The floors were covered thickly with rich rugs from Bokhara and Persia, and in the center of the tent was a marble pool filled with gold fish and surrounded by delicate ferns and flowering plants. At the side was a table set with imported crystal and heavy gold and silver services. The meats, fruits, and sweetmeats were forbidden to our host and were provided only for the Foreign Devils.

The front of the marquee was open to the plain, and an ample awning gave shade for the comfortable chairs and couches which we were to use. Only a heavy silken cord festooned on gaudy lacquered posts separated us from the scene of the festivities.

Directly opposite the marquee, several hundred yards away, stood enormous images of the figures about which Ram Lila is celebrated. On the right was the chief god of the Hindus, Rama, a bright, fat, paper figure built on a framework of bamboo, standing fifty or sixty feet high. On the left stood Sita, the chief wife of Rama, not quite as high as her spouse, but more striking in coloring and ornamentation. In the center, about half as tall, was a replica of the ubiquitous Indian monkey, his tail heavily tufted and arched toward the figure of Rama. During the day the images were to con-

template the games serenely, but when night fell they were to provide the bursting, flashing highlight of the day. I knew that because Jowaru was a pious Hindu and he had often sat in the dark at the foot of my bed and told me about Ram Lila and the coming of fire to mankind.

Meantime the Rajah clapped his hands and ordered the show to begin. All over the wide plain swarmed actors, acrobats, gladiators, and warriors. Singly, in groups and pairs, running, skipping, and loosing arrows into the air, hundreds of men and boys spread out like a tidal wave under the shimmering sun.

Standing behind my chair, Jowaru plied me with curdled milk, sweetened with honey and the white meat of tender almonds, and tried to explain what was going on. Archers predominated in that confusion, dressed in the ancient, varicolored costumes of India. They worked in groups of three or four. With great ceremony and with conventionalized motions, one group would raise their bows and let fly a shower of blunt, beribboned arrows at their enemies, who would run in mock retreat. Then the first group would run from the harmless arrows of their antagonists. There was much defiant shouting and turning of handsprings to enliven the spectacle.

Then the acrobats came, sleek, well-built boys under the tutelage of older men. For the occasion their loincloths were colored instead of white, and there was much running about and limbering up before their performances started. One little girl among them, dressed in bright red and pale

blue, walked on stilts which were easily twelve feet high. She had no supports, but actually stood on the ends of the high poles.

By now the boys were limbered up, and long cylinders of woven bamboo were held waist-high for them to dive through. This was followed by handstands, backward and forward flips, contortions and tumbling. Then the little girl was brought forward again, packed into a small bamboo basket, and before our anxious eyes an aged man plunged a sword in and out until we were convinced we had witnessed a bloody murder. But she emerged unhurt to skin up a bamboo pole and balance on her head on top of it.

At lunchtime fortunetellers came to the marquee, foretelling great good fortune for the Rajah and the white folk. But for the rest, they said, the sky was red with blood, for Kali, the goddess of destruction, had looked upon the earth and found it crawling with cheap life.

While we ate the rich and spicy dishes from the palace, we heard in the distance the sounds of the other festival—the beating of the drums of Mohammedans in the distant city. During a lull we could hear the hoarse cries of Moslem mourning, and Jowaru laughed, describing how the Mohammedan dogs were tearing their hair, beating their breasts, and shouting until their lips foamed.

At nightfall, the Hindus enacted the miracle play of the coming of fire to earth: the gods were bored, there was nothing new and fresh and original in paradise, and the taste of ashes was in their mouths. So Brahma invited the entire

Hindu pantheon to a great feast, promising them something new. Upon the banquet table he loosed a monkey, its tail bound with cotton soaked in oil and then set alight.

In its terror and pain, the flaming beast dashed up and down the board, amusing the jaded gods until they rolled off their cushions with laughter. But Brahma had miscalculated. The tormented monkey remembered the cool green trees and the clear cold water of its earthly home, and dashed from heaven toward the earth, bringing with him the sacred fire which has since then been of such benefit to mankind.

The Ram Lila play opened with archers. Now they held flaming arrows in their hands and the night sky was criss-crossed with lines of curving light. The huge figures of the gods were only dimly lit by their passage. Crowds of people had gathered around the plain during the day, and their garments were picked out in the glowing light.

Jowaru whispered in my ear that Rama and Sita and the monkey were loaded with fireworks. At length an archer approached the images. With shoutings and dancing he fitted a flaming arrow to his bow and shot it toward the tuft of the monkey's tail. In a moment a flame flared up and began licking its way toward the monkey's body. When it reached the torso, a loud explosion brought a dazzling display of spinning, whirring fireworks. Sparks spread out to Rama and Sita, setting them afire and lighting the sky with colored flames of red, green, and blue. It was like the eruption of three incandescent volcanoes. The crowd gasped and tumbled backward.

But behind the noise of the fireworks, there swelled a

hoarse, husky roar. It was like a great wind in the forest and as it drew nearer, I could hear voices shouting, "Ya Husain!" The edge of the crowd heard it, too, and screams and shouts began to pierce the loud booming.

Some of those nearest the figures of the gods fell with exploding bamboo splinters drilled through their bodies, red blood making black splotches on their light clothing. As the crowd pushed forward, there was an angry growl in the darkness. An advance guard of religion-crazed Mohammedans was skirting the grove in which our marquee stood, bent on breaking some infidel heads.

We should have sat tight until it was over, but Jowaru and the Rajah's servants were hard to restrain. We ordered our horse hitched to the two-wheeled trap, thanked the frightened Rajah rather perfunctorily, and promised to get him immediate help.

We soon needed help far more than our host, for Father drove right into the milling crowd and it was only by a miracle that we escaped unhurt from the flying staves of the warring religionists.

That night the looming famine was robbed of many victims. Near the embers of the gods, both Mohammedans and Hindus lay dead, and the fighting ran all the way from the ruined marquee of the Rajah to the crowded bazaars. Within the narrow, walled streets of the city, the fanatics tired of killing and began setting shops and houses afire. The native police, headed by an Englishman, restored a semblance of order only by driving both Hindus and Mohammedans beyond the city walls like cattle.

For two days the city growled and protested, but the even influence of the white man gradually restored peace. The sudden flare-up had relieved pent-up feelings. And now, with the fasting ended, and famine crowding its heels, the natives began to make their preparations to die.

# 4

THE COMING of autumn brought no promise of relief for hungry mouths, and Father planned a hasty survey of the district before the impending famine began. Five big tents—bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, and servants' quarters—were loaded into three oxcarts, and sent off in Jowaru's care. The family followed, some in the two-wheeled trap, some on bicycles, down the Grand Trunk Road to our rendezvous.

Our tents were pitched and furnished outside a large village, in a grove of trees. In an adjoining grove camped Evans, the Canal Officer, while he inspected hundreds of miles of British-dug canals, appraising the rainy-season damage and estimating how much food his canals might be able to salvage for starving India.

Wherever we moved that autumn, the distress was manifest. Ours was cattle country, as well as farming land, and the wide plain, which was usually dotted as far as one could see with herds of cattle, was nearly deserted. The death rate



among the herds had been overwhelming before the rains came, and the jackals and vultures, the dogs and kites, were fat and gorged. Now the new lush grass could not arrest the daily deaths.

Milch goats, gravid cows, and water buffaloes could be had for a dollar or two, and Father purchased a few of the latter. He bought some forty goats, for he knew what was coming. Out of pity he also acquired a clean-limbed young she-camel of the racing breed. She was called Ghandia, or Marigold, and was as playful as any kitten, though somewhat formidable when she reared up on her hind legs and pawed the air high over our heads. But during the famine Ghandia did noble service, covering eighty miles in a day with two grown men on her back.

The swing around the district was slowed down by crowds of importunate men and women, many of them collapsing before latent diseases that awaited only the partnership with hunger to break forth. Many of them, like the Chinese, probably from diet deficiency, suffered from the "grass" or "sheep" sickness. They went—like Nebuchadnezzar—to the fields and lived on grass. Their eyes glazed and their movements were those of a somnambulist.

Tuberculosis was the great scourge, although there were also sporadic outbreaks of smallpox and bubonic plague. It was not yet time for cholera.

Mother set to work to dose and doctor the crowding natives who sat patiently, night and day, outside the grove. It seemed hopeless, for—even then—she attended many a maternity case. Food was the urgent need, and Father spent

everything he could spare of his slim earnings for grain and vegetables. He butchered the cheap goats and sheep to make strengthening broth, which Mother forced down protesting throats. "What if their religion doesn't allow them to eat meat?" declared Mother; "I know it won't hurt them!"

Native Christians began to revert to their ancient religion and to worship the little whitewashed pats of earth which grouped around the phallic linga on its platform under the pipal trees. Father fed Hindus and Christians alike, and encouraged them with his example of "taking arms against a sea of troubles," and kicked down the mud patties to prove that they had no occult power over any courageous man.

While the ordinary Hindu passively awaited the descent of the famine, the Thief Caste was making plans to meet it halfway. These dacoits—who were neither farmers, tradesmen, shopkeepers, nor laborers, but traditional criminals and thieves—were taking steps to survive the coming hunger. While shooting for the pot, Father had taken his gun into the great Bihar Jungle; as he scrambled through the thorny scrub, down into the deep, rain-washed gullies, and up again, he came to a clearing in a ravine, which was full of men. There was a tremendous fire around which perspiring brown dacoits tended iron pots full of molten lead. Others dampened and tamped down the earth, hollowing out with fingernails small holes—ten to a row, and ten rows to a square. Into these molds was poured hot lead, to make slugs for the illegal muzzle-loading guns which rested against every tree.

Near by were deep square holes dug in the dry white ground, which had been covered over with mats of brush-

wood. The earth scooped out in the digging had been shoveled back over the mats again. Men carried earthen jars of water from the near-by stream, sluicing it over the piled-up earth so that it would drain through into the hole beneath. Father knew what this meant—saltpeter for making gunpowder.

The water strained through the brushwood mats, dissolving the saltpeter from the earth. On evaporating from the bottom of the hole, the solution left a white crystalline crust of the needed chemical. To this was added charcoal from the large fires and small quantities of sulphur from the bazaars to make black gunpowder.

The dacoits did not welcome a white man's presence, because their activities were sternly outlawed. At first they made menacing moves; but Father greeted them in the vernacular and chatted with them about trivial things until he saw a chance to retire. He left, feeling hot along his spine where he momentarily expected to receive a jagged slug of lead; but no attempt was made to stop him. Even in the jungle he was known as the Padre Sahib, a man of good intent.

The story had not pleased the English Civil Servant, however, for it meant that these outcasts, whom the British tried patiently to wean away from their traditional crime, were finding civilization too much for them. To avoid starvation, they were reverting to their ancient means of survival—violence.

To the dacoits, the police were natural enemies, like the great hunger which settled over Hindustan. But all through

the hot nights—nights which we spent on our flat rooftop—we could hear the calls of the guardians of the peace. Flung out from the police stations, along the Grand Trunk Road, the watchmen stood at intervals of a half mile or so. To keep contact in a land without telephones, the call would go out in a full high baritone: “Stay awake! Be ready!”

It mingled with the song of the brain-fever bird and the pound of drums and the clash of cymbals in the city, but the words would be picked up by the next watchman who relayed them farther down the road to his distant fellow. The sound died out in the faraway dark, a space of blankness ensued, and then we heard the rich halloo coming back—to tell us that all was well on the Grand Trunk Road.

And so it remained throughout the famine. The dacoits, deciding that discretion was the better part of valor, turned their guns against the beasts of the jungle—rather than against the starving masses of Hindustan. Their attempts to guide their own destinies rewarded them with sufficient food, and their ingenuity saved them from difficulties with the government.

But in the bazaars, the sale of opium was sharply increasing. During the springtime, Jowaru had often taken me through the beautiful poppy fields near our compound to watch the farmers slit the fat pods, scrape off and collect the sticky gum which soon turned black and became opium. Now in the stifling bazaar there was a brisk trade in the drug. The volume of that trade was the measure of hunger.

The buyers were those threatened by starvation, the poor families with young children and babies. The money spent

on opium they did not consider wasted. They knew their funds would soon run out anyway; and a few days of food—more or less—could not possibly matter. The opium was a merciful palliative. The little black pills were tied carefully into loincloths and waistbands against the time when the last food was gone and the complaints of starving children and babies could be deadened and stopped by the heaven-sent drug.

The role of the Civil Servant during the impending slaughter became evident through John Nicholson, who was both opium officer and registrar of births and deaths in our district. Nicholson was our only close white friend, a gentle and sensitive companion and a gifted conversationalist. He was a tall and well-set-up man of middle age, his hair nearly white. He lived a lonely life in a large empty bungalow because sickness had driven his wife and grown son from India. His hobby was the raising of dogs, and through his constant gifts of puppies he won his way to our hearts.

Nicholson was the third generation of his family in India. His uncle, also John Nicholson, had served the British in the Punjab, at Amritsar among the tall, black-bearded Sikhs. When the Mutiny broke out in 1856, John Nicholson of the Punjab had been one of the very few Englishmen who had managed to hold the loyalty of his people. The Sikhs are a warlike nation, and under the leadership of Nicholson they fought bravely for the British. At the siege of Delhi their white leader was killed; but to this day the Sikhs worship "Nichlaisain" as one of their lesser gods.

Our Nicholson's work, like my boyish interests, was not

with the Rajahs and the rich; the common folk, the sweepers, the outcast leather workers, the farmers and the shopkeepers, were his special care. Before the hot weather came, Nicholson had checked, weighed, graded, and shipped away the local opium. Now his work consisted of registering the births and deaths among a population of some million and a half natives. In fat years and in lean years, he was an extremely busy Civil Servant.

As registrar of births and deaths, it was Nicholson's responsibility to help the government stamp out the killing of girl babies. Too often this meant a hanging at the city jail of a weeping, desperate mother. For days after a hanging—and he was required to witness it himself—Nicholson sorrowed and rebelled. He could not bring himself to blame an ignorant mother, a misused human being absolutely without hope, for snuffing out the lives which she had unwillingly kindled.

When money for opium failed, when a recent widow found no welcome either in her own or her husband's family, when despair crept into disordered, feeble minds, the destroying of baby girls began to increase. Hangings became more and more frequent.

One case which Nicholson handled brought him to the verge of revolting against his duties and the justice which he served. To Jowaru, who told me the story first, the attitude of the white man was incomprehensible. There was a mother with three small children, and an infant girl newly born. The father could scarcely feed his family, much less pay the tiny rental on his one-room mud hut in the crowded city. The

young mother faced wandering, shelterless, with her tiny family, until starvation finally overtook them all. She considered it better and more merciful to end the life of her baby before the milk in her breasts caked and ceased to flow.

She had heard of the hangings and tried to outwit Nicholson's law. She put her baby under the bed and tied a rope around its tiny neck. Threading the rope through a hole in one of the bed legs, she brought it out over the doorsill, carefully pulling the door shut. Then she called a neighbor and asked her to grab the rope and pull hard. Something, she explained, was stuck inside the hut.

The neighbor tugged on the rope, and the distracted mother, laughing and crying at the same time, shouted, "Pull harder, harder, harder!"

It was this dazed and numb mother whom Nicholson had brought to the gallows, and he struggled bitterly with himself. Should he have sought some technicality whereby he might have saved the woman? Could it have served any useful purpose?

To Jowar Singh the whole event was a mystery, but he held that it did not really matter. Such details as baby killings and mother hangings were only the frills and edges of things; the real famine was yet to come.

Before two months of our busy life under canvas had passed, an urgent call came from John Nicholson. The government was making arrangements for widespread relief of hunger, but it would take time. The emergency must be met now. Would the Padre Sahib please return?

A multitude of natives—Hindus, Mohammedans, and outcasts—edged our veranda and filled our driveway when we turned into the compound from the Grand Trunk Road. They were mostly women and children, although a scattering of old men and cripples crept among the scant bedding rolls and cooking pots which littered the ground.

Those who could still walk crowded about the horse's feet and the wheels of our trap. When Itwari, our groom, jumped off his seat on the buckboard and ran to the horse's head, frantic women knocked off his turban and tore at his clothes. Nixie, a half-Arab stallion, became frightened and, throwing his head and forefeet high, started to back and side-step. With great difficulty Father got down and cleared the starving away.

"Lentils and rice," they cried. "O Protector of the Poor! Lentils and rice!"

"Good talk! All right!" Father reassured them.

But there was much to be done. In response to Father's summons, Nicholson hurried over with several hundred pounds of wheat and some lentils. While Mother boiled gallons of thick gruel, Father and Nicholson planned the work to be done, and the starving women followed them around the compound like the tail of a comet.

Great bundles of *jhundri* stalks—like the stalks of our corn—were ordered, and every available man was mobilized. Shelter was the first need of these unfortunates, after they were fed small amounts of Mother's concoction. (And the amounts were small, for a long-starved person can easily be killed by an overdose of food.)



Chaos and bustle turned our compound into the semblance of a lumber yard in a building boom. Avenues were laid out on the trampled grass, and men with heavy iron hoes cleared little squares of fresh brown earth. The cornstalks were untied, and the wind scattered the brittle leaves. Bamboo, green and yellow, was cut into lengths, tied with straw rope, and anchored securely into the ground.

The parrots and green pigeons marveled at the confusion. Our two cows and the water buffaloes snorted at their disturbed grazing grounds, and the excited dogs chased them and the astonished camel back to their stables. But when our forty or more goats trotted in from the Grand Trunk Road, with a plume of dust at their backs, *they* fell to eating the building materials and had to be driven away.

By nightfall, a city of wattle huts stood in ordered rows at the side of our bungalow. Dried grass had been spread out on the tamped earth floors, and family groups huddled together upon the thin cotton sheets, wrapped up like cocoons—or corpses—in their turbans and chuddars.

For all their long tramp in from the district, the goats had been milked that evening, and Mother gave milk to the children, and infants before ordering them off to bed. The adults found chicken bones and mutton fat in their gruel, but no protests were raised. As darkness fell, I could hear the clink of the cheap glass bracelets which wouldn't bring the price of a meal from the pawnshops, as mothers rocked their children to sleep to the husky lullabies of Hindustan.

Nicholson reported that, months before, the British government had ordered shiploads of wheat from the Argentine,

from Canada, the United States, and Russia, to meet India's desperate need. Even now the grain was unloading at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras and, as soon as it could be put into sacks, the railways had instructions to take it wherever men lacked food.

But the government's function could be performed only sluggishly, because each separate caste of India was officially recognized. That meant the government could deal with only one caste at a time. After due deliberation with the heads of the various castes, allotments of grain would go to the Brahmans, the thakurs, *Khathas*, and Chamars, for immediate and future needs.

Those who already hungered, however, could not wait for official channels. They were forced to ignore caste lines and seek out the Padre Sahib who acknowledged no difference between priest, warrior, sweeper, or outcast. Nicholson needed to go no farther than our wattle city to realize where immediate government help was imperative.

The first shipments of grain, therefore, were routed to our compound. And there was only one string tied to the apportioning of the grain. It was supplied without charge or the signing of bonds—so many ounces per day for a man, so many for a woman, and so many for a weaned child; but no man or woman might receive it who had not (physical condition permitting) done work. The nature of the work did not matter. Father was to decide that. He could build houses and tear them down, he could order great ditches dug and then filled in, he could ask his charges to draw water and pour it again down the well. But no work, no food!

It took days to organize our compound. At first, every tenth woman—usually a nursing mother—was told off to watch the children of the women who helped erect our corn-stalk city. Centralized cooking became a problem, but the men and women helped, and the youngsters scoured the compound for grass and twigs for fuel. Crowds of children went onto the Grand Trunk Road to pick up the cow dung which their mothers made into cakes to dry for burning.

In due season hand mills for grinding wheat into flour arrived. When these were set up, the women could come back to their wattle homes and earn their keep by grinding. Often at dawn I was awakened by the musical sound of their tinkling bracelets as they turned the stones to make their bread.

Presently families were sorted out, and as the huts became tight little units, the cooking problem eased tremendously. Cooking pots came out of corners and, once in possession of flour and lentils, each woman knew what to do. She built herself a horseshoe-shaped fireplace out of three bricks and some mud, cleared the ground around it, and plastered it with a mixture of cow dung and clay. Then she was ready to do her housekeeping in as fine a style as she had ever known.

Dusk brought out the little points of flame in the fireplaces and the white dung smoke hung like a veil over the trees. The lentils would be bubbling themselves soft in the pot over the fire, and the mother would be mixing her dough for the delicious chapatties, which are named for the pat-pat-pat sound of their making. The pot of lentils would be taken off the fire and put for warmth among the live coals. A convex

metal plate would take its place over the flames. And the chapatty making began.

Taking a lump of the dough—it was only whole-wheat flour and water—the mother deftly rolled it into balls between her palms. Gradually she worked the ball out flat, using a circular motion and finally crimping it with her fingers until it was the size and shape of our potato patties. Then the pat-pat began. Spreading her fingers expertly so as not to tear the fragile dough when it got thin, the woman hammered the patty between the heels of her palms. As she patted, she threw the dough from one hand to the other, turning it at the same time. The end result was a paper-thin circle of dough about the size of a salad plate. This was immediately slapped onto the hot plate.

When it was browned on both sides, the chapatty was lifted from the hot plate and placed directly on top of the live coals which spilled out of the fireplace. Here it split nearly in two and bellied up until it looked like a fat pin-cushion. As soon as it was taken off the coals, the imprisoned steam escaped, and the chapatty resumed its thin form—like *crêpe suzette*.

Then the meal began. Each man spread a chapatty on his left hand, which he cupped. Into this cup was ladled an ample supply of soft, steaming lentils, flavored with red peppers. There was no formal giving of thanks; but these people, who were being saved from starvation, each pinched off a small piece of the chapatty, scooped up a few lentils with it, and threw it away. "For the starving," each one murmured.

Eating in India is done with the fingers, and daintily too. It was one of my first accomplishments. With the best of them I could tear off triangles of chapatty, fold them into scoops, pick up the lentils, and shove the combination into my mouth without so much as dampening my fingers. One eats from the fringes toward the middle, and with any kind of planning the lentils and the chapatty finish simultaneously.

Word spread about the district that the Padre Sahib had built up a city of refuge for those dying of hunger. In less than two weeks our wattle city housed more than 3000 men, women, and children. At that figure our facilities reached the bursting point.

But the starving continued to arrive. The late-comers were in much worse case than had been our first ones. Many of them raged with disease which sucked the life out of them faster than hunger. Out of the city and from the country, straggling lines of sufferers crept along the Grand Trunk Road toward our bungalow. Often I saw them collapse at the roadside, and I could find corpses under the oleanders along our driveway almost any morning.

The aspect of a human being far gone in starvation is the same the world over. It is unbelievable how thin the arms and legs can become, with the bony joints bulging roughly through the flaccid skin. Lips recede from teeth, and eyelids no longer close over swollen hot eyes. Weirdest of all is the bloating of abdomens. All the flesh and sap and moisture seem to concentrate around the waist, making the scarecrow

heads and spidery arms and legs appear grotesque and undignified and tragic.

Early each morning Mother held her famine clinic on our side veranda, doing her best to save the stray human beings who had wandered in during the night. The veranda was some three or four feet off the ground, and her "patients" were made to squat in a line on the roadway which ran past. One person at a time was treated from the pitchers of milk which stood ready.

Children came first, many of them drugged with opium. Some died before the effects could wear off—and perhaps they were the fortunate ones; others had to be forcibly fed, because their instinct for life had flown in company with their sensibilities.

The half-dead mothers of these infants were pitiful beyond comprehension. Having given up all hope for themselves, they sought to safeguard the lives of their babies by selling them, not so much for the money—*that* would soon give out—but so that they might die with the fierce mother instinct fully satisfied. It never occurred to them to give away their children, for the Orient had taught them that nothing was to be had for nothing, and a thing without value surely must be cast aside.

The infants Mother fed on that veranda looked like death's-heads. The little faces were terrible, especially where the child had a full set of teeth. The lids receded, the eyelids stretched wide open, and the white teeth made a grinning like an evil skull. Necks were scarcely strong enough to support such hideousness.

In the first few days Mother tried to administer small quantities of milk in glasses. But the children wanted more than they got and savagely closed their teeth, grinding on the splintering tumblers. Mother hastily switched to enamel mugs; but even that was a failure, for starving jaws are strong with the strength of desperation.

In the end, Mother came to an effective makeshift. She had tried putting the handles of spoons between the clamping teeth, but that was too slow a process when there were dozens to be fed before they died in the roadway. Anyway, the cunning, starving youngsters rejected the spoons and seized the mugs. But Mother cured all that. She inserted her own thumb into each toothy mouth, and let the child bite until the blood came. There was no more swallowing of enamel; and when one thumb was thoroughly chewed, the other one took its place.

By the coming of spring the famine passed its critical stage. Government grain finally reached every corner of the district and the flood of starving human beings which sought our compound subsided to a trickle and gradually dried up. The wattle city began to thin out. Our guests from the near-by villages were the first to receive word that their fields and herds needed them, for the famine had left everyone short-handed. The exodus began by families, sometimes four or five departing at once. As they left, their cornstalk huts came down and the compound began to look more like itself.

When the hot loo blew up over the plains again and the

brain-fever bird disturbed our nights from the rooftop, only a few households were left. Finally Nicholson gave them food for the journey back to their villages, the government proclaimed the remittance of two thirds of the district taxes for the coming year, and announced that further aid was discontinued.

Mother bandaged her thumbs and permitted them to heal. The famine was over.



# 5

DURING THE famine, Jowar Singh was nearly as busy as the white *mem-sahib* with the mangled thumbs, and the exhausted Padre Sahib who fell asleep at his meals. I was left to my own independent investigations, which centered around the fireplaces of our refugees. But when the emergency ended, Jowaru resumed his efforts to reveal Hindustan to me. Through the clear window of his eyes, he made commonplace the million details of India's kaleidoscopic life.

Because I learned to see India through native eyes, it has troubled me often to hear persistent references to the "enigma" of the East. It is no more enigmatic than is the Western World seen through untutored eyes. Its customs are no more illogical than our own, its manners no stranger. Anyone who has ever tried to explain away the absurdities which abound in our accepted institutions must be aware of this, to some degree. The enigma of the East is that there is no enigma. Men and women, there as here, meet as best they

can, with the means at hand, the problems of daily living. If their methods strike us often as inadequate, ours as often seem preposterous to them. But below these superficialities, we are alike. East and West are geographical expressions only.

Looking back on his work, I suspect that Jowaru's biggest failure was in interpreting the womenfolk of Hindustan. Until I reached the mountains and the Tibetan border—where women go about with uncovered faces—mine was exclusively a man's world. There were some exceptions, however, with Jowaru himself providing—unwillingly—the most notable.

On the plains of India, ordinarily, only prostitutes, widows, and old women show their faces in the presence of men. Both Hindu and Mohammedan wives "curtain" themselves. During the height of the famine, however, our compound was full of uncovered women. When the marks of hunger began to disappear, the comeliness of some of their faces was extraordinary. Many of the younger women, both Hindu and Mohammedan, displayed every sign of classic beauty. Their features were delicately modeled, their complexions nut-brown and rich.

My favorite was a Hindu mother of about thirty. She was considered old by the natives, but her vivacious expression and twinkling eyes attracted me. It was her custom to "kiss" me in the native style—a procedure much more refined (in the native view) than our too intimate lip kisses. She placed the backs of her hands against my temples, then rolled her fingers shut along my cheeks. As her hands closed, every

knuckle of every finger cracked—a lively tattoo of affection.

By the time the famine ended, I was considered a man before whom it was indecent for a woman to uncover. As I was only ten years old when this happened, my impressions of the Indian plainswoman are superficial. But I was aware of flirtations, love affairs, and intrigues among the servants and among my friends outside our compound. One day I saw the wife of Durga, the watchman, nearly kill her two-year-old son by seizing his wrists and flailing his legs and body against a tree. She screamed and raved until I put a stop to her madness by threatening to call Father. She was beside herself because Durga spent his evenings in the company of the child wife of one of our grasscutters.

The grasscutters and grooms were low-class folk who lived far over in the corner of our compound, near the stables. This was the trouble spot of the compound. It was usually the scene of fights among the women and stealing of wives among the men.

The wife of Jowar Singh was a constant visitor to the stables, and a frequent offender in the more serious servants' quarrels. Because I loved Jowar Singh, I never permitted mention in my presence of the gossip that his wife was a common prostitute. But I suspect that the report was true. She was older than Jowaru, a brazen woman who never covered her face or made any pretense of good manners. She kept an untidy house, cooked badly, and was a clacking scold. Where Jowaru picked her up he would never disclose. She was a woman of the plains, he a hillman.

She was slightly heavier than most Hindu women and

taller, walking with a mannish stride. She wore bright reds and yellows and blues, and her face was roughened by small-pox. She went barefooted to show off her silver toe rings, and she was heavily hung with bracelets and anklets. One little golden stud adorned the left side of her nose, but there was no line of musical earrings fringing the outer edges of her ears. A respectable woman usually wears six or eight small rings encircling each ear, and Jowaru's wife had once been so bedecked. But if a woman becomes quarrelsome in a household of women, her companions undertake to mark her for life. They tear the rings (and the flesh) out of her ears. Jowar Singh's wife bore such a brand.

Her voice was harsh, and her instincts primitive; but I was too young to realize what caused her to run after the rough men in the stables with whom she openly spent most of her time.

Just before dusk one evening, Jowaru's wife set some cold food out for her husband and stole away to the stables. The cattle had been driven in and her lover, the milkman, was milking the water buffaloes and cows. The animals were restless, possibly because a hyena from the near-by Bihar Jungle was prowling about. In order to make the cattle stand still, the milkman called to Jowaru's wife to get some fodder for them.

The woman went into the dark hut where the chopped cornstalks and grass were kept. She took a basket and began to scoop up the fodder with her hands. The basket was nearly filled when her hand encountered something hard. Thinking that a careless grasscut had left his knife in the

grass, she took little notice. A second and third time, in the dark, her hand struck the object.

Once too often Jowaru's wife dug into the pile. She heard an angry hiss, and before she could withdraw her hand and jump back, a big black cobra lashed out. The deadly fangs caught the forefinger on her right hand. Screaming in terror, she ran out of the hut, with the snake still clinging to her.

The milkman, the grasscuts, and the women rushed to her, and someone managed to detach the cobra and kill it. Jowaru's wife, ashen with the fear of death, held her finger tightly and rocked back and forth where she squatted on the ground.

Jowar Singh was serving our dinner when the stable boy ran up with word of what had happened. Father knew exactly what to do. He got his medicine kit and hurried out to the stables. Afterwards I saw the cut he made in the woman's finger and the tourniquet he applied at the wrist—but that was when he returned to the house with her.

Mother, meantime, ordered a large kettle of milk to be set on the stove to warm. She ran to the cupboard and brought out a bottle of brandy. When the milk was hot, Mother made a toddy that was strong enough to choke any normal person. When the victim stumbled in, two men helping her along, Father poured tumblerfuls of milk and brandy down her throat, but it had no more effect upon her groaning and whining than if it had been so much cocoa, until about the fifth glass, when she began to get groggy.

The theory of the milk and brandy treatment for snake-

bite is that the milk will absorb whatever poison has reached the blood stream, and the brandy will see to it that the blood keeps on circulating. But it is an altogether curious remedy, for the more brandy the patient imbibes, the sleepier he gets, and the less lively becomes the flow of blood. The second and more important part of the cure, therefore, consists of counteracting the overwhelming drowsiness which overtakes the victim.

When Jowaru's wife began to feel the effects of the brandy, she forgot her predicament and begged to be allowed to lie down. She wanted to sleep for a long, long time; that was the only thing that interested her. Father noted the change with relief; the first part of the cure was satisfactory. Now came the strenuous part; she had to be walked and kept awake lest she die in her sleep like a freezing man.

Father ordered two of the fascinated onlookers to grasp Jowaru's wife under the armpits and put her on her feet. When they did, she began the scolding and complaining which lasted all night. I know, for I watched at intervals, having arranged that Jowaru would wake me from time to time so that I might peek through the French doors at the procession which tramped up and down the veranda until daybreak.

Ten pairs of men were dead-beat before sunrise, for the woman's feet were off the ground fully half the time of her walking. Jowaru's wife, too, was exhausted as a human being can be. She was too tired to whine or give abuse; too tired to struggle or pull her knees up. The brandy had died out of

her, she was thirsty, and the ashy grayness had left her face. When she got to bed she slept soundly for two days and two nights.

After she had eaten a hearty meal, she was as good as ever. She found her tongue at once, and used it to advertise to all the servants' quarters that, firstly, she had saved innumerable lives at the risk of her own skin; and, secondly, Jowar Singh was a fool and it was his fault anyway. Without delay, she resumed her intrigues at the stables.

It was this wife, with the guilty conscience and the intrigues with the low-cast stable boys, who reported Jowaru to the priests of Mahadeo, for breaches of *parhaise* (an untranslatable word), and caused him no end of trouble. An elaborate set of rules, all coming under the heading of *parhaise*, keep alive the Hindu caste system. The Brahmans are both the priests of Hinduism and members of its highest caste. They make it their special selfish business to see that all the *parhaise* taboos are meticulously observed.

According to the rules, no Hindu may marry a member of a lower caste—to do so forces him to step down to the lower classification. Jowaru was a member of the second highest Hindu caste—the thakur, or warrior, caste. His forebears had been warlike landowners. Thakurs alone, among vegetarian Hindus, held the prerogative of eating the flesh of the wild boar—an echo from prehistoric days when the wild pig was so destructive to cultivation. Over his shoulder Jowaru wore the three cotton threads of the thakur, which had been dipped in the holy Ganges, with which, with much

ceremony, the priests had adorned him when manhood arrived. Under ordinary circumstances he was a pious Hindu.

*Parhaise* forbade him to sit and chat with low-caste people, to smoke with them, to eat their food. If ever the shadow of a man below the thakur rating fell across Jowaru's cooking food, the food had to be thrown away. If the onlooker went so far as to touch one of the eating vessels, the vessels themselves had to be discarded as unclean.

I have seen Jowaru throw away his *lota* because I touched it while the other servants looked on. But he picked it up later, hid it in the fork of a tree, and when the episode had been forgotten, retrieved his property. When he purified himself for worship at the temple, I was not supposed to approach him; but if he were alone, he would willingly boost me up a tree, catch my unclean dog, or let me put my lips to his *lota*.

Three times, to my knowledge, Jowar Singh was reported to the priests for breaches of *parhaise*. Each time he had been careless, putting his service above his religion. When any member of our family required intimate services, our number one never hesitated—even though the white man was without caste. If a drink of water were required on a hot and dusty hunting expedition, Jowar Singh offered his brass *lota* for a drinking cup. When my brother and I squatted down near his fireplace, his food was put into our hands. If Father could not find a groom to hold his horse, Jowaru sprang to its head. He underestimated the hatred the priests bore him as the running dog of the Foreign Devil, and relied too heavily upon his authority as our number-one servant.



Each lapse cost him the best part of eight months' pay and endless extra work and trouble. He complained to me, but outwardly bore it with indifference.

"What will be will be!" he declared.

Jowaru's betrayal by the plainswoman came about in this way. One morning Bob and I went over to the compound of the Rajah of Jaswantnagar. Durga, the watchman, had reported that one of the water buffaloes was going to have a calf, and that afterwards the Rajah's elephants were going down to the river for a bath. We didn't want to miss either event.

The Rajah's keeper of the cattle awaited developments outside the stables, and he politely invited Jowaru to join him and his staff for a smoke.

While we played with the elephants—two fair-sized cows who let us run under them, pull their tails, and chin ourselves on their outstretched trunks—Jowar Singh squatted among the *Khaithas* (having made sure that the coast was clear) and smoked after the fashion of Hindustan. A small hookah was lighted and passed around from man to man, each one taking a deep puff. The hookah consisted of a tapering earthen bowl with a narrow neck, in the bottom of which was placed a wad of native tobacco. On top of the sticky, sirup-treated weed, the keeper of the cattle placed several small red coals from the fire. The neck of the bowl was then fitted onto a short hollow stem sprouting out of the polished coconut which held the water. There was a small hole in the side of the coconut around which each smoker pressed his thumb and forefinger. He applied his lips to his own hand,

therefore, as he drew in the smoke. Bubbling and croaking like a bull frog, the hookah was passed from hand to hand. On the whole, it was a most sanitary and satisfactory method of awaiting the pleasure of an expectant water buffalo.

The *Khaitas* with whom Jowar Singh smoked were of a lower caste, and though he was fully aware of the fact, he spent the entire morning in their company, not suspecting that the Rajah's grasscuts would carry tales to his wife's lover.

The buffalo calf came at last, and then the elephants were taken down to the Esan River for their bath. Bob and I accompanied the huge beasts, so Jowar also came.

Our progress was most informal, for the elephant drivers had put only a single, wide girth strap around the prodigious barrels of their charges. There were short knotted lengths of rope tied at intervals along the big girths, and we rode with our bodies stretched out at full length along the ribs and bulging sides, our hands gripped around the knotted ropes, strap hangers on either side of a billowing mountain.

The elephant drivers sat astride the necks of their charges, digging bare heels into the huge shoulders and thumping the ringing skulls with lengths of solid iron hooked and pointed like boathooks.

We were forced to dismount at the river's edge, for elephants wade boldly into deep water, holding their trunks up for breathing, while in shallow water they roll like colts in a pasture, shooting water all over the neighborhood.

We waited until the playtime was finished and the elephant drivers had holystoned the huge animals with bricks—

on both sides. Then we sat in the shade until they had dried themselves with dust which they snuffed up their trunks and then shot in clouds all over themselves. When each animal had broken off a ten-foot leafy branch to use as a lady would her fan, we remounted and rode back to the Rajah's compound, shouting at the elephants to stop trying to brush us off their backs.

When we came into the compound, Jowar Singh's wife was waiting. Mother had asked for us, and the woman made that an excuse for being furious. For the first time in my experience, she threatened to tell the priests that Jowaru had spent the morning with the low-born *Khaithas*, though the threat sounded hollow coming from one who had a stable-boy sweetheart. But she was as good as her word, and that evening the priests called on Jowar Singh.

I knew the spokesman for the Temple of Mahadeo, a sleekly fat priest—he oiled his skin daily with clarified butter—of a pale, brown color, who wore only a clean white loincloth. He came in the dusk to accuse Jowar Singh of backsliding and to summon him to trial at the temple. The envoy was flanked by an ancient, grizzled Brahman clerk, and a tall, knock-kneed youth with hair done up like a woman's.

Because I had seen the trouble in Jowaru's face during dinner, I stole out to the servants' quarters immediately afterwards to learn what was afoot. Squatting in a circle on the hard, bare ground, a large gathering of servants and their families talked with the priests while they waited for Jowar Singh. It did not seem proper for the whole compound to

witness the disgrace of our number one, so I told the on-lookers to take their families with them and go away.

There were protests, not of the open, defiant kind, but of the wheedling, groveling sort. But I insisted and the servants dared not openly disobey me. Presently the priestly delegation and I sat alone under the neem tree.

Sitaram—the fat priest was named after the wife of the chief god of Hinduism—remonstrated with me. When I said that Jowaru was my guru and a man of honor, he laughed. I ordered him off the compound, but that only made him laugh the more. When I tried to kick him, he pinned my arms to my sides and sat me on the ground. Instead of becoming angry, he was amused.

“You are as strong as a young bull in the springtime,” he grinned. “Small wonder that common folk tremble at your commands!”

“Be quiet!” I responded rudely.

Sitaram felt of my arms, my back, my legs. “You are already a fine young man,” he purred; “even before the hair shows on your cheek!”

“Stop it!” I shouted.

“But no doubt there is already hair on the body—under the arms—” the priest made his voice smooth and husky. “In the Temple of Mahadeo, serving the god, are comely young women—”

“Get out!” I screamed.

Jowar Singh took sudden shape in the dusk at my side. He ignored the priests and listened quietly to my angry accusations; then he told me to go into the house. My refusal was

overruled, but then I played the trump card which every white boy carries with him in India.

"I'll call the sahib," I threatened, "and he will drive these rascals—especially that fat pig—out of the compound!"

This brought the priests to my side with astonishing suddenness, and Jowaru finally permitted me to remain. We squatted again, and I heard the formal charges which Sitaram brought against my guru. I annoyed everybody with my interruptions and protests. But in the end Jowaru admitted everything; and I was left standing alone under the tree while the four men vanished in the darkness on their way to the temple.

For several weeks the discussions progressed—Jowaru trying to save himself money, the priests trying to discover how much the traffic would bear. During these negotiations I frequently went to the temple with Jowaru.

All that could be seen of the temple from the roadway was the conventional shrine, packed in among the shops which had sprung up around it. It stood on a masonry platform elevated five steps above the dust. Covering it was a graceful dome supported by heavy walls and corner pillars, the whole finished in reddish-yellow plaster. The phallic linga, a two-foot column of smooth black stone, stood in the center of the shrine, and a stone statuette of a recumbent sacred bull gazed at the linga from a corner. Both images were oily with the butter rubdowns the pious regularly contributed.

Jowaru and I always took a narrow alley which ran past the side of the shrine to the temple proper. There we came

into a crowded courtyard which ran irregularly around the ornate home of the god. Mahadeo himself was a plaster figure of heroic size in deep bas-relief, with the top of his head reaching fifteen or more feet into the gloom of the temple dome. He had the usual four arms, bulging abdomen and fat legs, bent outward at the knees and inward at the ankles, colored in vivid blacks, blues, yellows, and reds, and he occupied the entire back wall of the temple. The only light came from the small arched front door. On the bare stone floor before the god were wreaths of marigolds, bowls of clarified butter, and little butter lamps which made his coarse features grimace and change expression in the semidarkness.

The sunlit courtyard was a little city, for it was surrounded by the many cells which the priests occupied. At its farther end were the quarters of the little temple girls who served Mahadeo (and the living priests of Mahadeo) with the flesh of their bodies. They were often daughters of high-class families, donated to the temple in piety, and to save the expense of dowries. They walked with uncovered faces and were hung with gold and silver; their clothes were rich and colorful. They seemed very young, about twelve to fourteen, and viewed me with open curiosity, but they cringed when the priests drew near, and I could sense the creeping of their flesh. When they grew old, or were overtaken by disease, they would be driven out into a world they scarcely knew, as prostitutes to the utterly abandoned outcasts.

In this place Jowar Singh brought to an end the negotiations for his purification and reinstatement in the thakur

caste. He agreed to give gifts of food to the temple to the value of sixty-five rupees, and to provide a feast for its ninety priests which would cost twenty-five rupees. The total was about thirty dollars. Jowar Singh's wages—and they were good wages—were about twelve rupees per month, so the money had to be borrowed from Father.

The purification ceremonies took place immediately following the feast, which was spread in the temple courtyard at sundown. I saw the gathering and the start of the eating, but was made to leave early. Sitaram was the officiating priest, and the girls of the temple served the food and provided the entertainment.

Jowaru's report cannot be printed in full because it was not a pretty one. Sitaram was at his beastliest, and my interpretation of the recital filled me with an unholy desire to soak the fat priest with kerosene and set him alight.

The company gorged itself into a stupor on Jowar Singh's food, while the temple girls danced and sang the songs of India. In the girl orchestra, one struck the double-ended *dholuk* with the palm of her hands, establishing the rhythm; another plucked the graceful sitar with its slender neck and seven strings; another blew the twin-flutes which made the strangely moving harmony; and the last one pointed up the offbeat with a tiny pair of golden cymbals.

When the priests were wearied of eating and music and ribald jests, the purification was begun by Sitaram.

Four priests approached Jowar Singh. The first gave him a brass bowl. Into it the second priest poured milk from the sacred cow. The third dropped into the milk a fragment of

cow dung, and the last priest contributed half a glassful of the urine of the cow. Sitaram took the bowl and mixed the contents thoroughly.

Then he ordered Jowar Singh to drink it down!



## 6

IN THE EVENINGS, Miriam, Bob, and I rode to the banks of the holy Jumna River on Ghandia, the camel. Every detail of camel riding is interesting, and Ghandia was a creature of whimsical character. Being a swift-footed racing camel, she was always loath to sit down and always anxious to get to her feet, so our evening airings began with excitement and confusion.

First, the groom brought the camel to the side of the house and spent five minutes getting her to crouch. When he had accomplished this, he called loudly for Jowar Singh and as many servants as were within hearing. When Ghandia was surrounded, we were summoned, and the embarkation began.

The groom held the camel's head, and a servant stood heavily on each of her folded front legs. Jowaru supervised our mounting. I crawled up toward the front of the two-man, divided saddle, leaving stirrups free. My brother Bob

sandwiched in behind me, used the stirrups, and wound his arms around my middle, as much to hold me on as to help himself. Then Miriam was lifted to her place in the rear half of the saddle, and Jowaru made last-minute adjustments of hands and feet. Finally, the groom handed me the single leading line by which a camel is controlled. This ran to a wooden bobbin threaded in Ghandia's pierced nose, and when I took it the men on the front knees came to the alert. Unfolding her front legs slightly faster than the rear ones, Ghandia snapped to her feet like a jack-in-the-box.

Once launched, she was as gentle as a turtle dove. All we had to do was to point at whatever interested us, and she would take us over to see it. Sometimes we were all three giving her contradictory orders; but Ghandia had good judgment and, on occasion, even took us home against our wills.

The usual ride was a six- or seven-mile jaunt through the edge of the Bihar Jungle, down to the Jumna which flowed over the bleached sands. Ghandia knew the route, and my duties as driver consisted chiefly in not interfering with her.

She was capable of a steady fifteen miles per hour and often brought us home at a faster clip when we overstayed. But we seldom trotted her, for the jungle was filled with peafowl, partridges, pigeons, and parrots we wanted to see. The road sloped gently toward the river and was cut through increasingly high banks. We liked it best when the sun had gone and the teeming jungle life either prepared for sleep or awoke for the night prowling.

Our objective was a pontoon bridge over the Jumna,

which carried our road on to the kingdom of Gwalior. At the head of the boats, a good friend of ours, Narian Churran, lived in a wattle hut on stilts over the water. One evening he showed us an unusual habit of the camel. He got us to drive Ghandia down to the river's edge and put her at a steep bank of soft sand which flanked the road. When Ghandia's front feet began to ascend the steep grade, her back took on the angle of the bank and we were in danger of sliding off. Another step or two and she could not have kept her front feet on the ground. In this dilemma, Ghandia's instinct solved the difficulty: she bent her forelegs and walked up the bank on her front knees, keeping her hind legs straight. The result was that she clambered up the slope with her back as level as a table.

Narian Churran was both a Brahman priest and an Oxford graduate, and an outstanding example of the fact that, in spite of the tyranny of organized Hinduism, not all the priests of Hindustan were wicked. The vow under which Narian lived forbade him to eat anything except what the sacred Jumna brought down to him. When he was hungry he lifted a trap door in the floor and, using a small net on the end of a long bamboo pole, fished out of the river whatever looked edible. I feel certain that water-soaked marigolds, discarded by the upriver temples and burning ghats, comprised the largest part of his diet in certain seasons.

Narian wasn't emaciated, however, nor was his body bare and covered with ashes like the ordinary mendicant priest's. He wore a clean white loincloth, the loose ends of which

he threw over his shoulder. Over his right ear, looping front and back to his waist, were the sacred cotton threads of the Brahman. He kept his head shaven, except for one little patch on top and toward the rear. The resulting long strand of hair, called a *chuttis*, was twisted, turban fashion, over his crown. On his forehead was always the white, black, and red mark of Ganesa, the god with the elephant's head.

He was neither beggar nor parasite. In recognition of this, probably, the pious folk of the neighborhood floated good food down to him. He seemed happy and was confident that if he died of starvation, the gods would seize his *chuttis* and pull his soul into paradise.

Narian practiced yoga and often told me of the posturings and breathings by which the senses are withdrawn from the outside world and concentrated upon the hidden powers which lie within every man. My questions elicited the beginner's rules of yoga: the legs must be folded underneath, just so; corrective breathing must be practiced with alternate nostrils, drawing in air for nine slow counts, holding it for eighteen, and expelling it for nine; the fingers must be held over eyes, mouth, and unused nostril all the time; the stomach must be held firmly back against the spine. It was not necessary to be a priest to practice yoga, Narian assured me; and, indeed, I knew that many Indians attempted the physical—and mental and spiritual—discipline it demanded.

When combined with the correct diet, Narian told me, these preliminary posture and breathing exercises—after three or five years—would fit me for further steps along the

path of yoga. Perhaps after twenty years of ceaseless effort, mastery would come. He, himself, was a young man and had gone only a short way along the endless road.

Religious worship was not all as gentle, we discovered, as that of Narian.

"Who can see into the heart of a priest," lamented Jowaru, "or understand the gods without the help of a Brahman?"

In Jowaru's lonely mountains a man could march a full day's journey without encountering another human being; priests were few; shrines accepted the impartial worship of Tibetan, Hindu, and Mohammedan alike. But on the plains of Hindustan, one is never quit of Hinduism. While worshipping the cow which pulls the plow and the rivers which water the crops, India also worships the goddess Kali, the Destroyer. Thus Hindus pay homage both to the life-giving agencies and to death.

One method of worshipping life in our district, which was cattle country, was the nurture of the sacred bull, whose function is to ensure the increase of the herds in a land where the unsexed ox is used exclusively for a draft animal. The sacred bulls are invariably reared in the temples.

When a Hindu finds himself in a situation of deep anxiety or great joy, he often vows to offer a bull calf to his favorite temple in exchange for the favor of the gods. In crowded Hindustan, such vows are frequently enough met to give an ample number of sacred bulls to the temples and the herds.

One morning the priests of the Temple of Mahadeo waited on Father. They were squatting in the roadway beside the

veranda when he went out to meet them. Their spokesman attempted, with many circumlocutions, to justify the fact that priests were asking for the execution of a sacred bull from their own temple.

It seemed that in the spring before the great famine a pious Hindu, who wanted to provide a unique gift for the gods, learned that a low-caste leather worker had picked up in the Bihar Jungle a newly born and perfect male calf of the large bluebuck family. The rich Hindu came into possession of the little bluebuck and presented it to the Temple of Mahadeo. I had seen it there, drinking milk out of a brass lota as though it were a human being.

In the Bihar Jungle I had often watched Father and Jowaru shoot bluebucks, big and fleet as polo ponies, and as glossy as velvet, with six-inch horns, straight and strong, which could slash as dangerously as a wild boar's tusks.

As the temple bluebuck outgrew his milk diet, he was turned loose on the bazaar. He wandered down the crowded streets, snorting in the open shop fronts and shouldering aside the shoppers who blocked his way, as is the custom of sacred bulls. Often, from a safe distance, I watched him help himself to the precious grain which the farmers piled up for sale on sheets spread on the ground before them. Not one of them dared to drive him away, and he became a very silken and large-boned bluebuck.

While multitudes of human beings starved through the famine, the sacred bull ate well, developing a great deal of individualism and a hasty temper. The bazaar folk told tall stories of his prowess—and gave him a wide berth.

In the second spring, the buck began to feel the full powers of maturity. I feared the uncertain look in his eye and began to edge around him where I had passed boldly before. One by one, he drove out onto the plains the other sacred bulls who looted the grain sellers. His onslaughts on his rivals became so vicious that the bazaar people developed active fear of him. The aid of the temple was invoked, but the priests hid their own panic, publicly refusing to interfere with a creature of Mahadeo. Father offered to shoot the buck but the British authorities asked him to wait. Perhaps the call of the jungle would finally claim him and then there would be no outrage to explain.

But for once the jungle failed. One day the buck gored ferociously a pair of oxen, tied helplessly to a tree. A Mohammedan policeman had to be called to dispatch them because no Hindu dared to release them from their torments. A few days later the sacred bull ran amuck again, this time goring a water buffalo. The buffalo was killed outright, the cart to which it was yoked was upset, and the old man who sat in the cart had to take to a tree. The matter was becoming serious.

The Grand Trunk Road, near our house, saw the climax of the bluebuck's madness. In the early morning mists, he attacked an oxcart which held a farmer and his wife. The travelers apparently came from some distance, for they could not have known the animal's reputation. They tried to drive him off at his first charge; but he doggedly gored the near ox to death. When he started after the other ox, the cart was

already half off the road and the farmer and his wife were waving sticks and shouting. The bluebuck was diverted from his purpose. He left the ox and turned on the human beings. At length the farmer and his wife lay trampled and spattered and dead against the cart. The remaining ox, unhurt, struggled to break free from its yoke. The bluebuck had disappeared.

The priests of the Temple of Mahadeo, telling this story to Father, averred that the blame lay at the door of the devils which had brought famine and sickness to India. How could a single sacred bull withstand so many devils? Would the Padre Sahib, to whom it would not be a sin, shoot the sacred bull out of his compassion?

The Padre Sahib would, and the hunt was organized without delay. Although Jowaru could not take part, I went along.

With almost the whole city to aid, we found the bluebuck back in the bazaar. Father came up to him at close quarters, but there was no opportunity to use a gun safely. The crowd and the noise, however, made the buck uneasy and he turned, snorting and pawing, to move away. Nearly a thousand shouting natives hustled his retreat through the narrow streets. As he hurried his pace, the crowd waved and shouted wildly, for there is nothing so brave as a human being who has his enemy on the run.

In the open country, Father had a quick shot at the buck, but it only furrowed his back and made him break into a gallop, switching his tail. The sting of it, however, seemed



to bring him to his senses. Before him lay the jungle, and for the first time in his short life he became fully aware of it. He made a sudden bolt for the clumps of trees.

All that day we followed him. Father could not get a standing shot at him, so the seven rounds he fired resulted only in seven wounds. None of them was serious in itself, but the aggregate began to tell. The buck was slowing up, and Father pressed him hard because, for the sake of the animal, it is best to bag a wounded beast before nightfall.

At sunset, the buck came to bay in one of the deep ravines of the jungle. We had followed it for several miles up the sloping declivity, wide at the mouth, narrow toward the top. As we pushed on, the sides of the ravine became steeper and steeper. Finally we could see the buck at the narrowest part of the gully, at a place where the sheer walls made a dead end. It was here the buck turned to face us.

Father ordered the rest of us to stand behind and then began that cautious, hair-trigger approach which tells the story—one way or the other. He held his rifle across his body and he scarcely dared take his eyes off the cornered animal to see where he put his feet. The ground between hunter and hunted closed to sixty yards—to fifty.

No one breathed for the space of twenty paces. And then it all happened in a gasp and a flash and a thud! The buck brought his head down to his clawing forefoot, and with a grunt started his charge. Father shifted his feet for balance and raised his gun. I heard the twigs crackling under the pounding hooves. An unendurable wait; and then the loud

crack in that confined ravine. Another wait; and then the thud of the buck as he fell heavily. The sacred bull of Mahadeo was dead.

The Hindu worship of the sacred bull was a trifle compared to the worship of death, which was dramatized for me at Kali Ghat in Calcutta. Father took me there and as we approached the busy temple we ran into all the usual hangers-on. Cluttering up the sidewalks were vendors of sweetmeats, clarified butter, and small brass vessels for carrying the water of the sacred river Ganges. We were much stared at, for white visitors to Kali Ghat were few.

Flanking a door which led to the temple, we came upon an upcountryman and his family, a "curtained" woman with a small plump son astride her hip and a four- or five-year-old daughter hanging onto her skirt. The farmer drove a bargain for a small white kid tied to a lamppost. The rascal who owned the animal was asking an outrageous price for it, and when the farmer made feeble counteroffers, the owner told him that to pay his price was the only infallible way to propitiate Kali.

"Can it be," he sneered, "that in your country they do not know that Kali is the Goddess of Death, the Destroyer of Life, the Queen of Vengeance?"

The farmer quailed and fingered the few coins fastened to his loincloth.

"Don't blame me," the kid seller continued, "if Kali takes your son from you."

The mother turned her back on the man, pulling the children with her. The farmer shook his head and hustled his family away.

A fat priest, who had been listening, stepped in front of the farmer. He spoke soothingly, abusing the goat seller and offering to negotiate the purchase at a price which was reasonable. Why not? The kid would soon become the vendible property of the temple. When the priest found that a rupee and a half (about fifty cents and twice the value of the kid) was the utmost the farmer could afford, he passed the money to the goat seller with a well-rehearsed show of indignation, untied the animal, and showed the farmer where to take it. We decided to follow.

We stepped into a small courtyard, closely crowded with worshipers and the bleating kids they had brought for sacrifice. There was a series of doors off the court, and we followed our family as it edged toward one on the extreme left. After a long time, it was our turn to go in.

The door sill was more than a foot high and of solid masonry. When we stepped over it, we perceived the reason. Inside a narrow, oblong room there was a line of three priests—men whose bare bodies and loincloths were clotted and red with dripping blood. Before each priest was a wooden execution block, and in his hand a blood-drenched sword.

These appalling objects huddled against the wall on the left of the room, and the worshipers filed past them on the right. Each family with a kid to be sacrificed handed it over to one of the priests, who seized its forelegs in his left hand,

held its neck over the block, and severed its head with one stroke of the heavy sword.

The blood spurted wildly, the floor of the room swam with it. But the visitors shuffled steadily through the gore.

Feeling very squeamish, we waded forward to the opposite door and emerged into another little court. A backward glance showed a further reason for the high door sills; an outside open drain ran along the half-dozen sacrificial rooms and into it emptied the red gallons which the crowds had walked through. But our farmer and his family had turned sharp right, and we made haste to catch up.

We passed a trough of Ganges water in which pilgrims washed themselves, dipped their children, and rinsed out their mouths. This trough, too, drained into the river of goats' blood.

At the end of the court we saw, at first, only an ornate high pavilion supported by carven pillars. The crowd surrounding it was packed in beyond all moving. A priest, who was proud of his English and the fact that Kali had white visitors, saw Father and fought his way over to us.

At his call, there gathered around him ten or twelve fellow priests. Tall and lean, short and fat, they were as brutal a lot of bouncers as one could see. At a word from the English-speaking priest, they formed a flying wedge and drove into the backs of the unsuspecting crowd, shouting like maniacs.

We tried to stop them, but they went on knocking down children, kicking women aside, and driving their shoulders into men's unprotected ribs. With the best will in the world, the crowd couldn't have made way for us—they were too

close-packed. And yet, somehow, a lane was opened up. But before Father would let me walk down it, he turned and beckoned to the farmer and his family to join us.

Hindu and foreigner came presently to a carved railing under the eaves of the pavilion—and there was dreaded Kali, the Destroyer.

She was pitch black and stood some twelve feet high. She stood in an attitude of triumph, one foot resting on the chest of her decapitated husband. In one of her four hands she held his bloody head. A necklace of real human skulls hung around her neck and spilled onto her bosom, and her black face was split in a blood-red grin of brutality.

She glistened and ran with clarified butter which the devout had spread on her, and at her feet, near the headless torso of her husband, were many offerings of marigolds. Surrounding the entire pedestal was a brimming moat of blood, which had drained down from the sacrificial rooms and the washing trough, plus butter and marigolds.

With fear and wonder, our farmer friends bowed their heads and held their hands before the faces of their children. For a space their lips moved in silent supplication.

Presently the little girl glanced at Kali and broke out crying. Her little brother, infected with fear, began to scream. Hurriedly the mother leaned over the railing, scooped up a handful of blood, and devoutly poured it into the open mouth of her little son.

# 7

THE SPRING of 1907 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, and Hindustan again seethed with unrest. The Amir of Afghanistan planned a "tour of inspection" through India, and many agitators, Hindu and Mohammedan alike, fomented sedition in our district. They did much loafing in our servants' quarters and at the stables, and I listened to their talk because John Nicholson had warned me and because loyal Jowar Singh was doing counterespionage. The story the troublemakers were spreading was that the Amir of Afghanistan was bringing his vizier along to estimate the strength of the British, and that his army of tall, black-bearded warriors would come later.

The Indian Mutiny of fifty years before had broken out because the Hindu troops serving the British had been told that the grease on their cartridges was that of the sacred cow; the Mohammedans believed it came from the unclean pig. Both Hindu and Mohammedan mutinied and struck on

a Sunday while the British sat defenseless, worshipping in their churches. Since then the English had gone to services with their rifles beside them.

The agitators declared that the Afghan army was on its way down, that the Russians had promised help, and that the British would not win a second time. Great numbers of the natives were taken in by this talk. The District Superintendent of Police increased his garrison and a battalion of Bengal Lancers rode onto the polo field behind our bungalow and encamped there. For a time our house was gay in the evenings with the colorful mess uniforms of the Bengal Lancer officers, and the polo field was like a carnival with its pennoned lances waving about the city of tents.

When the Amir of Afghanistan actually reached Delhi with his vizier, however, our district grew tense. The little Church-of-England chapel across the Grand Trunk Road from our bungalow was furnished withhardtack and canned goods, stocked with rifles and ammunition, and its well was cleaned out and made fit for use. There were five English families besides ourselves in the city, and our orders were to go at once to the chapel if the cannon at the Police Lines were fired three times in quick succession.

That spring British troops were spread very thin throughout India and our station was dangerously undermanned. We had our police posted along the Grand Trunk Road in the usual fashion, but no one was certain of their loyalty. The Lancers were all too few, so their orders were to remain concentrated on the polo field—against contingencies.

The civil servants and the Padre Sahib, however, were

not left entirely defenseless. Each was issued a Henri Martini carbine, with ammunition, and I was extremely proud that I rated one too. The standing instructions were for each white man to keep a sharp lookout, especially at night.

Our houses were far apart, although they were over a mile from the city and thus out of range of surprise from that quarter. But we had no telephones, and rapid communication presented the usual problem. The D.S.P. (District Superintendent of Police) solved the matter in time-honored fashion. During the night, each white man was given a schedule according to which he reported on his own locality. At thirty-minute intervals an "All's well!" was passed. The big bronze gong which marked the hours at the Police Lines was our clock.

At the time appointed, Father took his carbine and went to the edge of the flat roof on which the family slept. He listened for the twice-repeated crack of a colleague's gun as the police gong boomed out in the dark. The signal might come from the judge's house, or from Nicholson's, which was to its right. But it came, and Father fired twice to relay the word along to the Bengal Lancers on the polo field.

I thought this was great fun, for I was often permitted to make the signal. But Father and his white neighbors remained apprehensive. The Amir unexpectedly decided to visit Agra after Delhi—and Agra was only eighty miles from us and short-handed with troops.

Then the situation eased, with unforeseen suddenness. The Amir abruptly returned to his own country and our night signals were abandoned. I do not know the official ver-



sion of what happened at Agra and Delhi to alter the Amir's plans. But this is the story the servants told me, when they had driven the agitators out of the compound.

When the great Amir of Afghanistan and his unctuous vizier came to Delhi, the servants told me, they found a great host of English troops. They rode for miles through the city, and everywhere the streets were lined, elbow to elbow, with white men, and not a brown face among them.

The Amir turned to his vizier and stormed: "You swore there were only a few hundred English in Hindustan! Look! The city swarms with them, like vultures over a corpse!"

"Have patience, my master!" whined the vizier. "The English knew we were to visit Delhi; they were prepared."

"Pig," roared the Amir, "and son of a pig!"

"Patience," begged the vizier. "We will surprise these English. We will go to Agra!"

The Amir agreed, and the English were alarmed, for there was scarcely a full regiment of soldiers in the Agra cantonment. But the red-faced commander was a resourceful man and he arranged for the Amir and his vizier to ride a crooked path through the city. As the visitors rounded each corner, the soldiers in the rear quickly broke ranks and ran to the head of the line, hidden by the corners the Amir and his vizier had not yet passed. As in Delhi, they saw white soldiers everywhere, lining the streets, elbow to elbow.

The Amir wanted to behead his vizier then and there. But the English were firm. "You can behead him or shoot

him or burn him alive, if you like," they said, "but only in your own country! In Hindustan there will be no killing at your order!"

That spring, after the Amir of Afghanistan had returned to his country, we were plagued by hundreds of chattering brown monkeys which lived in and around our compound. The chief reason for this crowding was the high-domed Temple of Hanuman, the monkey god, which stood in a grove not far from our bungalow. The grain which the priests fed them morning and evening was again plentiful.

When the monkeys answered the booming of the great temple gong, the trees swayed as though in a gale. With young ones clinging to the undersides of their mothers, and the larger males keeping the procession together, hordes of the brown bandar leaped from branch to branch, using their aerial pathways to the temple.

There was one small female among the tree climbers for whom Bob and I had an extravagant admiration. We named her Kullabattia, which means Black Flame. She was the cleverest thief I have ever seen. She was about the size of a wire terrier but much quicker. Her brown fur was darker than usual, merging almost into black along her back. Her nose and fingers were as black as tar. *W.F.*

Her young one came with springtime, and Kullabattia was a conscientious mother so long as her baby looked like a grotesque little toy. She lived safely on our fruit and the grain from the temple until Junior's body began to catch up with

his oversized head and prominent ears. Then she clamped Junior to her underside and took up her dangerous life where it had left off.

The long crooked cucumbers of Hindustan were her passion. Wherever I saw a honey-colored Indian child leaning against a tree eating a cucumber, I would squat down and await Kullabattia. She never missed. With a swish among the branches, she arrived, taking a station directly over the eating youngster's head. If the young one looked up, Kullabattia concentrated elaborately on the tiny guests who lived on Junior's scalp.

When the child's attention wandered from his cucumber for a moment Little Black Flame sprang into action. Junior snatched his hold on her shoulders and sides while his mother was in mid-air. Down she dropped lightly to the ground, directly to the left and rear of her victim. I couldn't see, but I knew that her arm glided out over the child's left shoulder and seized hold of the vegetable on the other side. A little jerk, two puffs of dust where her hind legs dug in, and Kullabattia was back on her branch with the cucumber—before the robbed child could get his mouth open for the howling protest which followed.

Little Black Flame was at her funniest when she took Junior to the meetings which were held in a huge banyan tree at the side of our house. These parent-teachers conventions took place when the spring crop of babies was getting too big to hang onto mothers, and the time came for weaning and lessons in climbing.

Kullabattia was invariably late, and if Junior wasn't making a mess of the butt end of a cucumber, his mother's cheek pouches bulged with loot. Mother and son skinned up the big trunk—first two or three lines of heavy branches which stretched from the ground, to the meeting place. Twenty or thirty mothers would be there with their youngsters, all of them lined up along a single big branch.

Presently the climbing lessons began. As though at a signal, each mother along the limb seized her baby by the scruff of the neck. Protesting young ones held tight and came away hard, but it made no difference. Looking very bored, the line of mothers simultaneously dangled their offspring out over the leafy space which hid the ground forty feet below.

Again, though on a signal, every young monkey was released—simply dropped—into space.

They turned somersaults, they clutched at leaves and twigs, they chattered, they wrote out the whole alphabet with their tails. But eventually each baby got a purchase on a passing branch and held on. From among the branches they squealed and screamed and scolded, but their mothers paid no attention.

This indifference was too much for the climbing class which stopped its noise and clambered back. That tame return for more punishment was the surpassing silliness of the whole performance, I thought. The little ignoramuses whimpered and hugged their mothers tight—only to be torn loose again for the neck-breaking descent. Three or four

times those young monkeys would submit, and they would have suffered the entire day if Kullabattia had not spied another cucumber and broken up the meeting.

But not all the monkeys were funny, as Bob and I found out. The big males, some of them as big as collie dogs, were often ill-tempered, and the natives avoided them.

We sometimes heard of misadventures among the travelers on the Grand Trunk Road. The big monkeys did not always confine their stealing to the children. Occasionally a man or woman came along with a stick of sugar cane which the big buck coveted. The monkeys dropped down to get it, without bothering to use any guile. The owner could save himself trouble by meekly surrendering his tidbit; but some of them were inclined to stage a tug-of-war. That was a mistake, because the males did not hesitate to scratch (which is bad), or to bite (which is much worse). Lacerated scalps, torn hands, and bleeding faces resulted.

Two of these ill-tempered males took a serious dislike to our dogs and formed the habit of following Bob and me when we left the compound. They leaped along in the trees, chattering and making faces until our dogs were nearly beside themselves. I can aver that wherever the fault lay in the beginning, the dogs were not to blame in the end.

We were not afraid of the tree climbers until we returned to the compound. Our front gate was flanked by two thick, square masonry pillars, flat at the top, and standing about ten feet high. Time after time, when we started through this gate we found a big male monkey seated atop each pillar. Their animosity was not directed toward the dogs. They

ignored the animals and unmistakably threatened us. Stones and shouts and hand wavings only infuriated them. Frequently Bob and I had to turn away and enter the compound through the bamboo clumps and over the wall.

## 8

DURING THE four years after the famine, we wintered on the plains, making midsummer trips to the Himalayan Mountains: to Landour, which was near Jowaru's native kingdom of Tiri; and to Almora, which was on the borders of Tibet. Those four annual changes from the plains to the mountains and back again provided startling contrasts. Before long I began to share Jowaru's prejudice in favor of the Himalayás. Here was elbowroom after the teeming plains of Hindustan; here were no religious tyrannies; here was frontier country where law reached no farther than the stretch of a bullet's flight. It was a different world.

The summer after the famine, Father suffered from persistent dysentery, and Mother from a severe bout of sciatica, so they were ordered to the mountains for the sake of health. Consequently, when the hot loo began to blow, the family entrained for the hill station of Landour.

We went by train six hundred miles across the level plains

of Hindustan, with scarcely a change in scenery. Fields and plains succeeded one another, mud village followed mud village, and the train rumbled over an occasional river and the monotonous network of British-dug canals.

But, suddenly, as it neared its terminal at Dehra Dun, the train headed for a mass of mountains rising abruptly from the level plain, two thousand feet into the air. With thunderous echoes, the locomotive plunged into a deep river gorge, panting and climbing tortuously. We were in the Siwalik Mountains, the world's oldest range. Then, as dramatically as it had entered, the train burst through into a broad, flat valley. Straight ahead, putting an effective period to the iron road, stood the true Himalayas; a piled-up rampart of rock rising six and seven thousand feet over the valley. In a short space the mountains loomed warningly toward us, the engine sent out the re-echoing blast of its whistle, and the train coasted—diminuendo—into the station of Dehra Dun.

"Dehra" means tent and "Dun" signifies valley; we had arrived in the broad and flat Valley of Tents that separates two mountain ranges. The town of Dehra lay about midway in the Dun, and there remained a further journey of some thirty miles before we reached the village of Rajpur at the end of all wheeled traffic. A solid white road wound away from Dehra station, leading between the bamboo clumps, the sturdy oaks, and dark evergreens, to the foot of the high mountains.

In our time (before the automobile came) transport across the Dun was provided by riding horses and horse-drawn tongas. The firms operating tongas kept their vehicles



in a paddock near the station, and their touts assailed us as soon as we alighted from the train. The confusion and suspense of bargaining, the struggle to procure strong animals at lowest prices, and the loading of duffle were hectic as only the Orient can be hectic.

The tonga is a two-wheeled cart, wide and long, with a single heavy tongue jutting from the forward end. Seats are arranged along each side, as in a dogcart, and a canvas awning gives protection from the weather. A bench across the front provides places for the driver and servants, while a door and steps in the rear serve the passengers.

The method of harnessing the two ponies to the tonga is unique. A heavy iron crossbar is hinged to the end of the tongue, and the arms of this crossbar are fitted into yokes which are cinched like saddles on the backs of the ponies. Heavy iron pins hold the crossbar in place, and there is much getting in and out, rearranging the load, and reseating of passengers before the tonga is ready to roll. The weight of the load must be sufficiently forward to hold the crossbar firmly against the horses' backs, but not too heavily overbalanced.

When the balance was right, the mad dash began. To warn loaded coolies and pedestrians out of the way, and to announce his approach to way posts, the driver blew a battered bugle. Each "house" has its exclusive call, and our uniformed and bearded driver blew his with unnecessary frequency and pride.

Once started, the tonga ponies proceeded at a dead gallop. The bugling, too, jumped three notes and became hysterical, and the crossbar rang and chattered like a riveting machine.

For three and a half miles the tonga skimmed, and then it began to fly. The driver blew his warning of approach, and the ponies stretched out madly. We were nearing the post where we changed horses.

On the roadside in front of the stables stood a groom with two fresh animals. Our tonga slid to a stiff-legged stop and the driver leaped to the end of the tongue between the lathering horses. An attendant on each side withdrew the crossbar pin and led away the tired animals while the driver supported the cart with many grunts and admonitions for hurry. Fresh ponies were pushed around the bar and pinned securely, the driver seized the reins and vaulted into his seat. With the first toot from his bugle, the new team broke into their gallop. The whole change required no more than forty seconds.

And so it went for half the width of Dehra Dun—a change of horses every four miles, and the thirty-mile ride to Rajpur completed in an hour and a half.

In the old days, before the railways, military roads took the travelers to the Dun, and along them were spaced those Indian government resthouses—the dak bungalows. Today, in all the important cities which the trains serve, modern hotels take their place. This is, no doubt, a sign of progress. But for me nothing will ever replace the resthouse which was (and in places still is) a powerful influence in holding together the white man's Hindustan.

The dak bungalow was usually a substantial building in the Anglo-Indian residential style, lying spaced at twenty-to thirty-mile intervals along all the important lanes of travel. In it was every convenience of the day, except bedding. The

furnishings were European down to the last detail, from the rugs and silverware to the pictures of Queen Victoria and Edward VII on the whitewashed walls. In attendance were uniformed servants, usually doddering ancients with pensions, and travelers got from them hot water for baths, meals prepared and served in foreign fashion, and endless tales of *sahibs* and *memsahibs* long since dead.

The government charged no tariff for use of these dak bungalows, but the meals were paid for in accordance with a printed schedule, and this money (together with tips) constituted the income of the resident staff.

At the Dehra dak bungalow, there was an ancient cook who had a tale to tell of the days before railroads, when wheeled traffic ended at Dehra instead of Rajpur. Those were the days when doolies were the only means of transport across the Dun to the foot of the steep path which climbs to the Mussooree and Landour mountains. I heard the tale when the train which carried us toward Landour was delayed and forced us to spend a night in the Dehra dak bungalow.

The dooly was a carrying chair, a narrow, oblong box of light wood and bamboo, suspended by two carrying poles strapped along each side and protruding front and rear. It was roofed, and its sides and ends were shuttered to keep out the glare and to give ventilation. A narrow seat was fitted into one end, facing in the direction of travel. One person occupied the dooly and had room at his feet for a small amount of baggage. He was carried by four men, with two relief bearers, the trip through the Dun to Rajpur requiring a day and a half.

The Mohammedan cook at the dak bungalow was the one-time czar of the dooly operators. He was perhaps seventy, which is very old in India, and had once been tall and proud, but now his long coat of red, with its snowy white cummerbund, hung loosely over his bowed shoulders, and his crested white turban balanced uncertainly on his head. But his full gray beard and bright eyes still suggested a strong and self-reliant character. He unfolded his tale between lamp-lighting and bedtime, out in the bare court before the kitchen; the three of us, the cook and Jowar Singh and I, squatting around a fitful small fire which fought the evening chill.

It happened, the cook related, during the mother and father of all hot seasons, when the devils of famine and sickness killed men and women beyond all counting in Hindustan. It was the summer when the mother of my children died, and two of my three sons. Multitudes of white men and their wives and children, too, were overtaken.

One evening all my bearers were bone-weary with travel and terror-stricken by the sickness they had witnessed. At dusk a slim and beautiful *memsahib* arrived in a carriage. Never before had I seen such a radiant woman, and I rejoiced that she had escaped the sickness. But her eyes were troubled because she held in her arms a little blue-eyed son upon whose face crept the color of death, a color I recognized as only a man recently bereaved can recognize it. The lovely *memsahib* begrudged the time necessary for eating, and said to me: "Get me a dooly and bearers—quickly!"

I replied that food was good as a guard against sickness and

a few moments of rest would bring comfort, for the clear air of the mountains was over Dehra Dun. I did not tell her of my fears that no dooly bearer would travel again that black night—even though I beat him. But she went at once to the bearers, sitting in a circle at the side of the dak bungalow. “I want men to carry me and my baby to Rajpur tonight.”

No one moved, and I could hear the bubble of the hookah in the stillness.

Then Mangal, a rascal from Rajpur and a leader of my men, spoke up. He said the night air was very dangerous, the men were too tired to face the devils who stalk the night, and a man-eating tiger from the hot plains had taken up his hunting on the Dun.

The other men echoed Mangal’s words, and I turned toward the kitchen to prepare food. But this mother was fighting for the life of her baby and she was not easily to be put off with words. She grew angry and then smiled; she made threats and then entreated; she gave abuse and then wept.

At length Mangal murmured, “What will be will be,” and agreed to go. The *memsahib* pulled him to her side and asked for five more men. Reluctantly they came, fearing the night and the death it harbored, but fearing more the maledictions on the lips of the white mother.

The black journey to Rajpur started at once, and a relief carrier bore a lantern ahead to light the way. But already the *memsahib* knew that her child was beyond saving.

She went off into the night, singing choking lullabies to her dying son. It was dark in her chair, the lantern threw

agitated shadows onto the crowding trees, and the silken pad-pad of their own bare feet frightened the men; but the *memsahib's* songs reassured them and drove them on.

They marched until the third hour before dawn. The mother felt the life ebbing away from the son in her arms, but she dared not cry out. A man may beat a dooly driver into unconsciousness; he may half starve him and underpay him; and he will endure these things. But a man may not confront even such a creature with death in the jungle night, for then he will flee as one possessed by demons.

Shortly before dawn, the little man-child died, but still the mother could not cry out after the fashion of our women. For her own safety, and for the sake of her dead child, she must sit dry-eyed in the night, quell the sorrow which assailed her, and sing more loudly to urge the bearers on.

For a time all went well. But suddenly there came a cry of terror from the man who bore the lantern.

"Tiger!" he screamed.

The dooly was dropped roughly to the ground, and the *memsahib* tried to calm the frightened men with words of reassurance, but she could not. The bearers gathered together for an instant, and then the sound of their running feet disclosed how they scattered in panic into the deep jungle. Even the light they took, leaving the grief-stricken mother alone, with the body of her blue-eyed son.

Then, in the silence which came after the flight, there arose a snarling, hungry sound, nearing the abandoned chair on the dark path. The white woman sat very still. It was the tiger.

For the remainder of the night, the tiger circled the dooly and coughed through the shutters. Time and again, with a deep growling, it put its forepaws on the roof, nearly overturning the chair, seeking some opening for its claws. The *memsahib* hugged closer the little son turning cold in her arms, and prayed for daylight. At sunrise the tiger departed to his dark cave.

When the frightened bearers stole back to learn the fate of their passenger, they were greeted by a self-contained *memsahib*, for she realized that even by daylight she could not reveal the truth if she wished to reach Rajpur. So she fondled the corpse of her son as though he were still alive, and the following night reached the foot of the mountains.

The old cook rose creakingly to his feet, ending his story as he had begun it. "In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

Landour was a purely residential mountain, dotted with foreign-style stone bungalows, churches, schools, and military barracks. It depended for its supplies upon the neighboring mountain of Mussooree where there was not only a hotel, but also a large bazaar, a parade ground, a park called Happy Valley, and a telegraph office. Thacker, Spink & Co., the booksellers, Whiteway, Laidlaw & Co., the huge department store and mail-order house, and Kellner & Co., the grocers and purveyors of wines and spirits, had establishments in Mussooree. Electric lights, telephones, and moving

pictures had not yet come; but, in Landour, we lived as we might have done in southwest Iowa.

White faces were the rule rather than the exception. The mountain was shaped something like a tea cozy, with one spur connecting it with Mussooree and another descending in steps in the direction of Jowaru's kingdom of Tiri. It was covered with stunted oak, bamboo, and deodars; with pines, firs, and the giant rhododendron, which often attained more than a hundred feet in height.

In the Himalayas, rhododendron trees grow to enormous size and bear huge red and white clusters of blossoms. The hillmen wash these flowers and put them in a glass jar with honey and water, or sugar and water. The jars are then placed daily in the summer sun, for weeks. The rhododendron petals swell and fill with nectar, supplying the hillman's table with delicately flavored preserves.

About a hundred years ago, a British officer, who was a flower fancier, brought dahlia bulbs to the Himalayas for his garden. So favorable did the imported blooms find soil and climate that they now cover the mountains, even spreading into Tibet. Other mountain flowers include the lily of the valley, begonias, iris, primrose, hyacinth, violets, calla lilies, roses, gentians, and a host of others.

On every little shelf nestled the bungalows of the white man, and the steep paths connecting them with the main roads were neat with tarred guard rails.

The highest point in Landour, over six thousand feet above sea level, was called Lal Tiba. From here the perpetual snows



of the deep Himalayas stood up clearly over range after tree-clothed range. They gleamed white and deep purple in the full sun, and burned with every color of the prism at sunrise and sunset.

Jowar Singh was at home at Landour and he quickly settled into his smoke-blackened room in the servants' quarters, breathed a deep lungful of air, and lapsed busily into the dialect of his childhood and youth. He made it his duty to order the water carrier around, seeing that the mules—each one with goatskins balanced across his back—kept us freshly supplied from the waterfall below our house. It was Jowaru who went to the edge of the shelf our bungalow stood on, and called into the echoing valley for the rickshaw coolies and chair bearers, when we wanted to go shopping or visiting. He closed his eyes and placed his hand over his right ear—to prevent the bursting of the eardrums, he declared. With full voice he called until the valley rang. Presently the coolies, loafing along the road, or resting under the trees, made reverberating answer. There ensued a long-distance bargaining, a loud verbal contract, and Jowar Singh roared directions to the prospective burden bearers.

When visitors called at our house, their bearers and grooms waited at the side of the yard until Jowaru's duties were attended to and he could join them for gossip. I often joined them, too. They were men from Jowaru's kingdom of Tiri, from Nepal and Bhutan, Mohammedans from Afghanistan and Baluchistan; Afridi, Wazirs, and even Tibetans. Some were tall, others short; but the soles of their bare feet were like heavy-duty tires, their legs and backs were like girders,

and their shoulders like the steel bits that hold an ocean liner in a rough sea.

These men lived in the age of flint and steel, wearing scant loin clouts and covering their heads with heavy woolen blankets folded cunningly to make a peaked hat and a wide cape. To kindle a fire for smoking, they held a wisp of white cottony fiber against a flint, striking with their steels until the sparks flew. When the fiber, peeled from the underside of a weed, smoldered, they blew it into a glow against pithy wood, soon kindling a blazing fire of twigs. For a pipe they twisted an oak leaf cornucopia-wise and pinned it with a straw. First a small pebble, then the tobacco, and finally a few live coals started the pipe to smoking. The group passed it around as the natives in the plains did. When visitors departed, the fire was stamped out and the pipe discarded.

Although the hillmen used flint and steel and could neither read nor write, they were men of great hardihood and many accomplishments. From them I learned how to subsist indefinitely on the mountainsides. They showed me that not only the red seed pod of the wild rose was edible, but that the young shoots also might be peeled and eaten. They showed me where wild strawberries ripened, and how to find a sweet berry which grew on a thorny bush. They taught me how to penetrate thick clumps of giant nettles to find the fruit which resembles amazingly the raw Irish potato; and how to mangle the leaves of a low-growing weed for a poultice in case of nettle sting.

The great gray langur—the Himalayan ape—directed them to the clear drop of sweet sap which jells at the base of

each leaf of the stunted oak. The little barking deer led them to the tender bamboo shoots pushing upward in the feathery clumps. This knowledge Jowaru and his fellow paharis handed on to me.

My guru seemed to know when the rains would come and when stop; he could tell when a leopard passed, and often lured the little wild dog of India to a place where I could see it. But his greatest accomplishment, I am certain, was the ability to foretell earthquakes.

Perhaps this last was a series of coincidences, but Jowaru made his forecasts with absolute conviction. He was unable to explain the secret of his knowledge; it was compounded of a mixture of inner feeling, the action of the birds and beasts, the temperature, the state of the sun, the moon, and the stars.

But Jowar Singh was right the year that San Francisco suffered so heavily and so many volcanic and seismological activities took place in the Andes, across the Rockies, through Japan, and athwart southeast Asia.

It was spring, and Jowaru had spent a strenuous afternoon with Bob and me. We had rambled far down into the valley where the washermen laundered our clothes by beating them against a rock on the edge of a clear mountain stream. We were hunting the early hyacinths, irises, lilies-of-the-valley, and violets, and we saw many rock pythons and gray apes. The dogs had been particularly unruly and the warm sunshine tired us out.

Jowar Singh accompanied us with bitter protests all after-

noon. We wanted to go farther and farther, investigating this ravine and climbing that rock. Contrary to his usual custom, Jowaru hung back, reminding us that each step we took downhill we would have to retrace uphill. Finally, when we turned to breast the mountain homeward, he fell silent. We teased him, asking whether he had suddenly changed into a Hindu of the plains, whether he were sick, whether he would like us to carry him on our backs. He had neither anger nor reproaches for us on that return journey.

As we neared the house, Jowar Singh looked searchingly up and down the mountain. "By my hillman ancestors," he exclaimed, "there will be a big earthquake at four o'clock tomorrow morning!"

We ate a buffet supper on the veranda that evening—Mother, Miriam, Bob, and I. Father, after seeing that we were settled, had returned to the plains. We forgot to tease Jowaru about his earthquake because we were hungry.

Our house perched on top of the rocky spine of the spur which descended from Landour mountain in the direction of Tiri. Towering a thousand feet over us was the approach to Lal Tibá, and a steep zigzag path scaled the sharp rough hog-back up to the top. The shelf our bungalow stood on was cut athwart this ridge, and our galvanized-iron roof made a clean-cut angle with the spur. At the rear was a deep ravine, carved sharply—like a heavy fold—out of Landour mountain. In front was a shallower amphitheater curving gracefully away to Mussooree.

Bob and I slept in a back room which faced the deep ra-

vine at the rear. Mother and Miriam occupied a room on the end of the house, toward the solid mountain, but Mother used the bureau in our room.

I remember little about bedtime that night. I was overwhelmed with drowsiness, and Mother and Jowar Singh came into the room several times. The latter bent over my bed and warned me to wake up very early in the morning. "Come altogether wide-awake," he pleaded, and I sleepily promised that I would.

It was nearer five than four o'clock. First I was sound asleep, then I was wide-awake, as I had promised Jowaru. There was no sleepy transition. The room was flooded with daylight and Mother (always an early riser) stood at the bureau. She was already dressed and was giving the finishing pats to her freshly combed hair. My bed was in the far corner, and I recollect looking at her and seeing her stagger weirdly. Some plaster rained down into my face, and I looked up at the ceiling. I saw the ceiling and its supporting wall separate—pull apart, slowly, until a black gap of four or five inches opened. I looked back at Mother who had shakily pivoted around to face the room and was now trying to steady herself against the swaying bureau behind her. Again I looked up at the ceiling, and the stone walls at the corner of my bed began to sag apart. I sat up and yelled.

"Jowar Singh!" I bellowed.

But my shouts were never heard—even by myself. Our house made a frightful crunching as I screamed, and then the entire military barracks on the mountaintop—a thousand feet above us—ripped loose from their foundations with the

sound of heavy surf and toppled into the deep ravine behind us. As the huge blocks of masonry broke up, they dislodged great boulders and tore down full-grown trees; and the entire bursting, swelling, leaping avalanche thundered down toward us.

Mother, herself, doesn't seem to remember clearly just how she managed it, but, before the crest of the petrified tidal wave reached our bungalow, she had shoved Bob and me through the crazy twisted door to the dining room, had flown to get Miriam. Jowar Singh was already kicking in the French doors leading to the veranda. At his back were the pale-faced, glassy-eyed cook and night watchman.

The lip of the roaring landslide hit the rock which supported our house before Jowar Singh could get in or we could get out. A big square of rock crashed through the ceiling behind us, and the house danced like a small boat in boiling rapids. Jowaru—somehow—won through the door to us and helped hustle us across the wide veranda. Chunks of stone and plaster were already bouncing across it. Mother was the last out, and she had just stepped off the porch when the whole side of the house fell in as though a bomb had hit it. Then the roof collapsed in a pillar of dust, and presently we saw tremendous boulders, trees, houses, furniture, and human beings sweeping headlong past the back of our house—as though carried on a dry river.

The moving mass swelled up to the very brim of our spur and pounded against the foundations of our bungalow; then it veered crazily away and piled deafeningly down the ravine.

It was all over within an hour. By nightfall we knew that no more than three houses in all Landour remained habitable. I don't believe that the loss in human life was ever accurately gauged, although it must have been well in the hundreds—soldiers, servants, hillsmen, and vacationers. For the balance of that summer, Landour lived mostly in tents which were pitched near the unharmed houses. In their still-solid rooms, dining halls were set up, and beds for the young, the aged, and the sick were made available.

There were a number of smaller, harmless quakes during that summer, and Jowar Singh continued to foretell them accurately. But though he tried hard he could never convey his secret to me, and I leave the explanation of his extraordinary powers to someone else.

## 9

THE LANDOUR EARTHQUAKE occurred during our second (and last) summer near the kingdom of Tiri. Meantime we had found Almora, on the borders of Tibet and thirty days' march to the southeast from Landour through the high mountains.

Thanks to Jowaru, no feeling of distance or strangeness accompanied us into the deep mountains of Asia. The time had come when we children spoke Hindustani in preference to English, when our parents used highbrow English to prevent our understanding what they said, when it was America which was remote.

When we started for the mountains that third summer, to escape the heat of the plains, our family caravan left the railroad terminal at Kathgodam in the mists of early morning. We jingled out of the sleepy town like a column of troops. Father, Jowaru, and I rode sturdy mountain ponies—each one accompanied by its groom; Mother, Miriam, and Bob



rode in carrying chairs—each with six men; and five pack ponies carried our baggage.

We breasted the winding mountain road with many calls and shoutings, and an extra chair bearer took out his flute and piped us forward to the plaintive minor strains of a hill-man's song.

For some miles the road was wide and well traveled—even at early dawn. Then we came to a fork. To the left lay Naini Tal, the summer capital of the United Provinces and an up-to-date hill station. To the right lay the mountain ranges, rising with ever-increasing steepness up to the Tibetan plateau. We turned right, and at the fork we left Hindustan behind.

It was springtime in the mountains, and the snow still clung to the taller peaks. Streams were fierce and swollen, and waterfalls came down noisily from among the treetops. Except for the bamboo, deodar, and rhododendron, the flora became alpine. The waxen begonia grew timidly under wet and overhanging rocks; jack-in-the-pulpit pushed up from the leafy mold; and violets margined the beds of blue gentian.

All that day we marched along a narrow road shaded by the thick, arching trees. It zigzagged crazily up steep slopes or made sweeping hairpin turns down ravines which were as dim as twilight. For hours we marched without a sign of human habitation. The men who passed were long-haired hillmen with wooden jars of milk on their backs, or charcoal burners. About midday we were overtaken by the mail runner who panted past us on the trot, the Kathgodam mail on his back, and in his hand his badge of office, a six-foot

spear, with a collar of bells at its slender throat. The mail runner carried it with a free-swinging arm to tell the men of the hills and the beasts of the jungle that he guarded His Majesty's Overland Mail. Each man's stint was a four-mile run in the morning with the mail from down country and the return journey in the evening with frontier post; so the travel time for the mail from railhead to Almora was cut to less than two days, the couriers running night and day.

The villages we passed usually nestled in sheltered valleys, beside swift green torrents. We spotted them by the soft tinkle of cowbells on the steep hillsides. Although the loss to leopards, panthers, and tigers is often high, the hillmen pasture their herds among the thick trees. Each man knows his cattle by the tone of their bells, and each can estimate his loss from a distance. The level patches in the valleys are cultivated with potatoes, corn, beans, and barley.

The villages were helter-skelter collections of stone huts. The hillmen who lived in them defied every rule of health. Their roads were chiefly sewers, rain-washed in summer and frozen in winter. Their homes had no chimneys, yet they cooked their food over open fires in the center of their living rooms. They slept, eight to twelve of them, in the space of an ordinary garage, and they sealed themselves in with smoke, summer and winter.

We stopped for lunch on the outskirts of one village which clung to the inside of a deep gorge. The stone huts were built single file along a narrow ledge, with our road between them and the turbulent river below. While we packed to continue our journey, I saw a crowd of twenty or

more men and women gathering across our path. The men wore long-tailed shirts, and the women were gay with colors. I suspected that it was a funeral, but Jowaru laughed at the idea. "A hillman dies as frequently as a mule," he quoted a Pahari proverb. Then he suddenly shot a question at me. "How often have you seen a dead mule?"

I thought a long time and then had to admit that I had never seen a dead mule.

"Very good talk," crowed Jowar Singh; "it can't be a funeral."

It turned out to be a christening. In the center of the crowd an old woman held the new-born baby, wrapped in many lengths of swaddling clothes. There was much good-natured and loud conversation as the christening party threaded the village and came to a deep sword cut in the side of the gorge, through which a leaping tributary boiled into the main stream. There was no bridge, so the path turned sharply to the left. The crowd followed along this new gorge for several hundred yards, coming to a shelf in the rocks where the Tibetan road crossed over.

The party did not use the bridge; they kept straight on to a thin, high waterfall at the head of the cleft. The rocks, here, were drenched with mist and the ravine boomed and shook. At the foot of the falls was a deep pool which the water had hollowed out, and in the middle of it the waves spurted and tumbled so uniformly that they might have been made of slippery glass. At the edges of the pool the clear cold water eddied lazily over the smooth gravel.

The old grandmother chose a shallow spot at the brink of

this roaring pool, and the crowd formed a semicircle around her. Jowaru and I had no difficulty in finding places near the water's edge. Slowly the old lady unraveled the little baby until it was naked. Then she lowered it gently into the icy water. The baby kicked and screamed (though we could not hear the sound), and its grandmother had to hold it tightly lest it drown itself. Its body first turned red, then pale, and finally bluish. Its floundering protests ceased being continuous, became spasmodic and further apart.

It was nearly dead, I should judge, when it was pulled out of the mountain water which ran off the snows.

I was indignant and angry, but Jowaru insisted that it was nothing. It was the custom of the hill folk to do this to their babies as soon as they were born; and it was an excellent thing. If they survived, they would be strong and useful among the mountains. If they died, they were saved much trouble and suffering; the mountains would certainly kill them in the end. "*I was so treated as a babe,*" declared Jowaru, pulling himself up to full height and banging his chest.

Our day's march ended just before sunset at the dak bungalow of Bhim Tal, in the district of the Seven Lakes. Bhim Lake was one of them. It was nearly circular, and surrounded by four wooded peaks which hemmed it in and towered three or four thousand feet above it. Its calm waters were as blue as the skies.

The dak bungalow hung two hundred feet over the water, on the shoulder of a steep mountain, and when the eye became accustomed to the immensity of the view, the story of Bhim Tal was plain. The lake was a filled-in crater, and its

four mountains the once-molten slag heaps of the dead volcano.

Before dinner, Bob and I climbed down to the water's edge. We moved slowly along the firm white beach, marveling at the clearness of the water and the reflection of the evening sky. Then, in two more steps, we both sank into quicksand above our knees. In front of us the sand billowed gently, the crests drained white, while the hollows filled with glistening moisture. Frightened, we flung ourselves backward and scrambled to firm ground. The quicksand sighed and heaved lugubriously when we pulled our legs free and hastened back up the steep hillside.

The pageantry of the sunset on the water made an indescribable jewel of Bhim Tal. I stood beside Jowar Singh until the short twilight turned the waters gray, tracing the brilliant clouds, the dark green mountainsides, and the turquoise sky in the flaming lake. Native legends concerning Bhim Tal are legion, but the one I prefer tells of the marble palaces of a hillman's god which stands like Neptune's court, deep in its waters. The hillmen swear that they have often seen it, and I also can avow that it is there. When the high pink and white clouds stood up over the sunset and shone in the waters, deep below the surface I saw walls of marble—with finest traceries, jeweled minarets, and flowers of purest ruby, amethyst, and jasper. And I feel certain, as the natives do, that the path to this fairy palace leads over the quicksands at the foot of the dak bungalow. There is no other way in which a human being can reach it.

That night we lay in the bungalow and listened to the rich baritone songs of belated hillmen hurrying to their native villages. In the first blackness of early night they sang to keep up their courage; but when the moon sailed into the sky, they padded along in silence, saving their breath for their journey.

As we neared Almora, on the fourth day, we encountered all the signs of a troubled frontier. In this fringe of empire few laws existed, and they were difficult to enforce; illegal weapons trickled through on hidden footpaths, unknown to the administrators. Russian intrigues against Britain had spread from Hindustan into Forbidden Tibet, and the stalwart mountain folk lived in a state of excited unrest. For the most part, the British enforced order; but the Himalayas are vast, and it was impossible to forestall every ruse employed by the Czar's adventuresome agents.

On that first trip to the frontier, we passed a mountain temple which stood beside the Tibetan road where it dips into a deep valley between Ramgarh and Almora. The British engineers were still working on the road—one company busy with dynamite and shovels, the other company standing guard against raiders and snipers—and the bridge below the temple was still a temporary one. It was a simple catwalk festooned on two wire cables crossing a swift green torrent.

When I revisited the temple later, in company with Jowar Singh, the priest complained that the new iron bridge of the English had ruined the temple's income. Formerly there had been a bridge of rough bamboo rope and rushes spanning the

stream, and the repair of this bridge was the temple's responsibility. Each user of it gratefully paid toll to the temple. Now this income was cut off.

My guru, already well along toward disillusionment and chronic priest baiting, made derisive remarks to the priest, telling him to take heart. The British roadmakers had already pushed far northwest, he suggested, and in time the priest would no doubt think up some new scheme for robbing travelers.

The priest was an eagle-beaked giant with a scar across his forehead, cutting through his left eyebrow and running down the cheekbone. He lacked a sense of humor. It was only after Jowaru threw a few coppers at his feet and asked to enter the temple for worship that the anger died out of his flaming black eyes. I went with them.

The temple stood inside a courtyard of high stone walls. It nestled up against the steep mountainside so that overhanging trees touched its flat roof. It was an unpretentious square building without windows and scarcely elevated above the flags of the court. A heavy wooden door stood barred and closed to prevent any casual glimpse of the god inside. The courtyard made an elbow around the right of the temple, but, on the left, was a smaller door which opened into the hut which the priest occupied.

We went, first, into the hut, where a fire smoked in the center of the earthen floor. The single room was filled with acrid fumes which had no outlet except through the door. In a corner were the priest's bedding roll and a few cooking

utensils; and that was all. There were no stools, writing materials, or wall hangings.

The men squatted down for a chat, and I wandered over into the corner where the bedding roll lay across a door which was scarcely visible in the thick smoke. The door was slightly ajar, and I thought it must lead into the temple because there was no hint of light behind it. I called to Jowaru that I had found something, but the priest made a sudden, unreasonable fuss. I was told to come away from the door at once.

When the priest presently escorted us to the temple and threw open the heavy double doors, I tried to mark the entrance where the side door of the hut communicated. There was no trace of it.

The temple was very bare, with a look of negligence betokened by the thick dust which lay over everything. A few empty butter lamps stood at the feet of the god, on a sort of pedestal rising several steps from the floor. Siva, the storm maker, was the local deity. His statue was of stone, backed up tightly against the rough temple wall. Crude colors had been splashed over the god which stood somewhat larger than man-size. The face was scarcely recognizable, but the high, spiral coiffure, the four arms, and the gilded spear of Siva were unmistakable.

Jowar Singh's worship was perfunctory. He knelt down facing the god and made several obeisances toward the floor, muttering something I could not understand. The scar-faced priest looked on with an indifference he did not try to con-



ceal. In the high mountains the shrines of all religions are patronized impartially by Hindus, Mohammedans, and Tibetans—each one worshipping as his priest has taught him.

Later that day, Jowaru and I rounded a turn in the zigzag path and suddenly confronted a solitary white man on foot. The stranger did not appear anxious to encounter another foreigner, for he slid off the road before we could come up. We heard him stumbling down the hillside. At the stone hut where the men who ran the mail lived, we learned that he had come into the district from the northwest. Probably a Russian, they thought.

There was something very peculiar going on, declared Jowaru. The priest at the temple had hinted cautiously that a white man was going to lend assistance with rifles—Russian rifles. But first the temple had to do its part by inciting the local hillmen. The priest had questioned Jowaru closely about the people of Ramgarh and Almora, but particularly about the chieftain of the Ramgarh district.

The landowning chieftain of Ramgarh was a difficult man to handle. He was a graybeard, nearing eighty, although he stood as straight as any deodar tree. He owned most of the land through which the British built their road, and the old man had been paid handsomely for every foot of it. Furthermore, the road would greatly facilitate the transport of his charcoal to market. It wasn't likely that the priest could do much with him.

The hillmen who lived in the little stone villages through the chieftain's mountains were not fighters. Some of them raised Indian corn and Irish potatoes; others ran primitive

mills driven by water wheels; and still others raised cattle for their milk. By far the largest proportion, however, burned charcoal. In plying their trade, these men took their families and scattered to distant mountains. After they had cleared a wide swathe around the mountainside, they set it alight. Any night I could see the mile-square fires glowing across the valleys, and I knew that the burners would wait for weeks until the flames died out of themselves. Then they would pack the charcoal into circular bamboo baskets, load these on their backs, and jog-trot into market. This was not fighting material.

Nevertheless, Jowar Singh maintained a strong distrust of the priesthood and he feared a trick. It was a notorious fact that the old landowner had often shown himself to be a superstitious and gullible ancient. He always sought advice at the temple concerning crops, new business ventures, and family matters. The time had been when the old gentleman even heeded the priest to the detriment of his pocketbook.

Upon arrival home, I promptly forgot all about the scar-faced priest, the foreigner who couldn't speak English, and the chieftain of Ramgarh. Several weeks passed, and a lively little war broke out to the north of us—toward Tibet. I spent many of my afternoons (we still studied in the mornings) watching the British troops filing out to the scene of battle. The Lancers, the little Gurkhas, and the King's Own Rifles took the brunt of the work, supported by the ugly snub-nosed canisters and the screw guns. Day after day I followed their maneuverings by the rattle of musketry and the booming of artillery in the echoing valleys. The nervous blinking

of the heliograph, too, showed me the tides of battle on distant slopes.

Late one evening, Jowar Singh whispered to me that trouble was expected down Ramgarh way. The priest was preparing to take the English in the back—and the next morning was the critical time. The priest had advertised that Siva would perform a miracle just after sunrise.

I tried unsuccessfully to get permission to make the three-o'clock start the next morning in order to see Siva's miracle. But I got Jowaru excused so that he could go. My sleep that night and my lessons the next morning were not of the best.

Jowaru showed up in time to serve tiffin, but I had no chance to talk with him. He had put on a clean long coat and a newly wrapped turban, and his service was dignified. Once or twice, only, did he shield his face with his hand. Then I saw his shoulders shaking with laughter. I was furious, and told him so when he leaned over to offer me food. He merely chuckled and whispered: "Afterwards—afterwards!"

Out in the kitchen, amidst gales of laughter, I heard the story of the miracle of Siva. Jowaru had arrived at the temple at daybreak and had entered the courtyard quietly. The sound of bleating goats attracted him to the right of the temple, and there he saw the priest butchering the animals and saving their blood in his cooking vessels.

Jowar Singh tiptoed over to the hut and went inside without being seen. Through the smoke he saw a hidden door—it was still ajar. This time, however, a light burned behind it. Jowar investigated, and what he saw sent him scurrying out of the hut, across the courtyard, and down the road to Ram-

garh. Halfway to the village he encountered two Tibetans of his acquaintance. To them he told his news, and they made a plan to thwart the scar-faced priest.

The counterplotters waited until the chieftain of Ramgarh and his henchmen packed themselves into the temple, kneeling before the god. The priest made a long oration, explaining the wickedness of the British raj and exposing their desire to enslave the free men of the hills. He advocated war—a holy war, in which Russia would aid. Then he addressed himself to the image of Siva, which leaned—stony and indifferent—against the wall. If the gods desired war, the priest shouted, let Siva convince his people; let him show some unmistakable sign.

Before the words were ended, the crowd gasped. Their astonished eyes beheld a small trickle of blood which started from Siva's nostrils. His lower lip shone redly and then began to drip. The ancient chieftain's mouth fell open and he dropped his head to the stone floor. His hillmen shouted in terror. More blood came forth. The shouts increased. The blood poured, spreading over the pedestal and touching the knees of the old man of Ramgarh. Everyone was in a frenzy.

Into the surge of the climax boldly crashed Jowar Singh. "What nonsense is this?" he shouted. Horrified silence suddenly fell. Only the drip-drip of the blood from Siva's face broke the hush.

Beckoning to the Tibetans, Jowaru dashed out of the temple, reaching the priest's hut a full three strides ahead of that dignitary. The Tibetans were at his heels.

Into the hut and over to the side door they ran, pushing

into the narrow corridor which the door masked. They were brought up sharp by a half-dozen steps leading to a platform. Upon this platform stood the elusive white man—pouring goat's blood into the trough which channeled Siva's hollow head from the rear.

Jowaru was not entirely clear as to the sequence of events after that. The crowd piled into the hut and the small space was crammed to suffocation. But the Russian—if he was a Russian—gathered up his things and bucked through the leaderless crowd, unmolested. He disappeared in haste toward the north. The priest also took undignified departure—toward the south. The war against the British suddenly became unpopular with Siva, whose face had already ceased to flow with blood. The Ramgarh chieftain should have been grateful for his fortunate escape, but he was exceedingly angry. He ordered his people to get back to their work—and never to return to Siva's temple again.

And so far as I know, even today the temple by the bridge on the Tibetan road between Ramgarh and Almora still awaits another priest—and worshipers—to serve Siva, the deserted storm god.

With these plots and counterplots, small wonder that as we came nearer and nearer to Almora we began to see detachments of "Signals," British Tommies with blue and white armbands, loafing near the roadside posts, or marching off busily with their tripods and heliographs. The telephone and telegraph were nonexistent, but the heliograph made an effective substitute. It was a system of reflecting mirrors

whereby sun flashes (lamp flashes at night) might be directed to any quarter of the compass. A shutter at the lens of the heliograph could be opened and closed by its operator, so as to make the dashes and dots of the Morse code.

Road parties, outposts, and supply trains moved through the mountains constantly, and the heliographs followed them. As spurs, large rocks, ravines, and trees obscured their view, "Signals" picked up their apparatus and clambered up or down the mountainsides to re-establish communications. Their blinking, flashing points of light appeared at unexpected places, making a continuous line from the telegraph office at Kathgodam to faraway Almora.

By midafternoon we had dipped into our last deep valley, had passed the temple of Siva, crossed the iron suspension bridge, and begun the long climb to Almora. By late afternoon we had our first view of the town.

The Almora of my day was genuinely an outpost of empire. Formerly an historic part of Forbidden Tibet, it was now politically in British India; but just beyond it towered the mountains of the Roof of the World. In Almora were blended all the races, customs, and creeds of Central Asia. Tibetans comprised the majority, but there were black-bearded Afghans from Herat, smooth-skinned Nepalese from the southeast, Hindus from the hills and plains, and even Chinese from far-off Szechwan.

The town was the bartering post where merchants from all over the Roof of the World exchanged their goods—their wool, bronzes, semiprecious stones, musk, and gold dust—for the goods of the white man's factories. Furthermore, Al-

mora guarded a vital pass through the high mountains into Forbidden Tibet on the north, and commanded the valleys which led to secluded Nepal on the southeast.

Judged by down-country standards, Almora was little more than an overgrown hillman's village, but Britain was prepared to hold it at the cost of war. There was a single twisting business street which clung to the high shoulders of the 7000-foot mountain, and both sides of this road were tightly lined with two- and three-story stone houses. The road was no more than twenty feet wide, and the overhanging balconies of the houses almost met above the busy shops which occupied the ground floors. Turbaned and bewhiskered merchants sat cross-legged in the perpetual twilight, surrounded by their wares and calling excitedly to their skin-clad, pig-tailed, and pantalooned customers.

This was the bazaar, which stocked penknives, scissors, spectacles; cheap cotton goods, leather articles, and beads; phonographs with huge trumpets, music boxes, typewriters, and cameras—the things which the merchants from all of central Asia carried back to their people.

Above the bazaar, on a grassy slope which crowned the mountain, stood the whitewashed barracks of the military. In them lived the British garrison which watched over the Tibetan marches, maintained law and order among the merchants, and kept the mountain roads free from robbers. In my time the King's Own Rifles formed the nucleus of the garrison, but they were supported by such native regiments as the Bengal Lancers, the Sikhs, the Punjabis, and the Gurkhas.

Halfway between the barracks and the town were the

picket lines, wherein were to be found the only other Americans for hundreds of miles around—Missouri mules. A great deal of the “might, majesty, and dominion” of the British Empire rested on the backs of these sleek brown creatures, for their function was to transport all munitions, to carry the screw guns, and to bring up the food which fighting men must eat. When I got to know the men who cared for these mules, I learned they had named their charges Alexander, Cleopatra, Queen of Sheba, Plato, and all the rest of the immortals.

The real reason for the existence of the picket lines, the whitewashed barracks, and even of the bazaar itself lay to the north of the town. It was the caravanserai where the merchants from the Roof of the World kept their animals, cooked their meals, and transacted their business.

In construction, the caravanserai was little more than a walled-in court about 150 feet square. A large arched stone gate was the only entrance to the court, which was flat and covered with fine gravel. Rows of sturdy tethering pegs marked the lines where the animals of the caravans were tied. Around two sides of the enclosure was an elevated and stone-flagged platform which had been roofed with galvanized iron, forming a kind of veranda, cut by stone partitions at twelve-foot intervals, and providing dozens of booths for the use of merchants and caravaneers. Although open toward the court, each booth was complete with a basinlike depression in the center of the floor for the dung cooking fires, and with raised stone dais on which blankets might be spread at night.



But our journey was not yet finished. We could not live in Almora proper. The British did not permit a white family to occupy native quarters, nor were we eligible to reside in the military houses near the barracks. The advent of the civil government to the mountains would one day bring bungalow building, but it was still many years away. In order to find anything suitable, we had made arrangements to move about eight miles out of Almora, to the top of Simtolah mountain—a neighboring peak.

Simtolah mountain was roughly conical in shape, standing near the 7000-foot mark. The slopes were covered with feathery clumps of small mountain bamboo, with stunted oak and deodar; and the entire western side was fragrant with a solid belt of pine trees. Azaleas grew everywhere, and giant rhododendron—taller than the deodars—was a commonplace. On two sides of the mountain, the valleys were as much as five thousand feet below us, cut by the silvery lines of rivers, dotted by frothy rapids. Toward the Almora side, the valleys ascended sharply toward the razor-back saddle which connected us with the frontier town.

The top of Simtolah mountain was pinched in by deep ravines, much like the figure 8. The southerly loop was leveled off, and upon it was built a large stone bungalow known as Simtolah House. The northerly loop of the 8 was fifty feet lower, and it was leveled off for our bungalow—Simtolah Cottage. A winding, tree-lined path connected the two residences.

Our single-story stone bungalow was oblong in shape, with a deep veranda running along the entire front. We had

four bedrooms, a dining room, and a living room, each of them communicating with the veranda through French doors. We boasted a small front yard—level and finely graveled—along the western side. To the south there was a little flower garden. Neither of these was extensive, and each ended abruptly at the steep slopes of the mountainside—at the *khud*. Behind the house and below it, on a shelf hollowed out for it, was a lesser group of buildings, comprising the kitchen and servants' quarters.

From our veranda we could look to the north and see range after range of the mountains of mysterious Tibet. And on clear days, giant Nanda Devi with its snow-capped head stood up in the west nearly five miles above the level of the sea.

At Simtolah we were finally astride the dividing line which separated British India and the Kingdom of Tibet.

# 10

OUR LANDLORD in this faraway place was William Herbert Danzy. He met us, as we came up the long avenue of dark deodar trees, in the dusk. A host of natives stood dimly outside the line of trees. A half-dozen torches guttered uneasily on each side of the avenue, and at the head of the path Danzy stood alone, a man of medium height and stocky build, holding a frantic fox terrier on a short leash.

The dog stopped its vicious barking when we came up for introductions, and in the torchlight we looked at our landlord. He had doffed his hat, a wide-brimmed felt with a hand towel pinned around the crown. His hair was iron gray and long, falling down over his shoulders, and a heavy beard and mustache masked his face. His weather-beaten cheeks glowed bright red, and squinting blue eyes were almost shut. He looked like a prophet out of the Old Testament.

Danzy's first question, after etiquette had been satisfied, came as a surprise. "Might I trouble you for the time o' day?"

He spoke with a hint of an Irish accent, holding his palms out—native fashion—to show that he had no timepiece. Father told him the time.

"Many thanks," responded Danzy.

He backed away, imperceptibly, when Jowaru came forward, and the fox terrier broke out again with his furious barking. "Who's that?" Danzy challenged above the din.

"It's Jowar Singh, our khidmatgar," shouted Father. "He would like to make arrangements for us."

Putting the bristling dog between himself and Jowaru, Danzy peered against the torchlight into the nebulous crowd of natives. "Hosini!" he called several times. Out of the shadows there materialized slowly a long-coated and pantalooned ancient, white-bearded, obsequious, and servile, a whining, hand-wringing creature.

"Show the new sahib's servants to the cottage," Danzy commanded, and the dog fell quiet as the servant backed away.

Simtolah was a large plantation of nearly ninety acres, which capped Simtolah mountain. Danzy took me through it furtively, not as though he were its master. The fox terrier trotted at his heels on a short leash and warned away all natives with his sudden displays of viciousness. There were orchards set out with imported fruit trees, fields, barns, and a large herd of English cattle. Two small lakes nestled in the folds of the mountainside.

At the foot of the avenue which led to Almora, we came to a collection of stone huts which looked like a small village. Danzy wouldn't let me go near it. "There're a crawling lot

o' down-country men—children an' grandchildren o' the servants me father brought up here." He grimaced and turned away. Coming up behind him, at that moment, strode a brown youth with a rope in his hand. The native salaamed sullenly, but Danzy was startled and angry. He kicked the terrier, which hadn't given warning, and then tore into the native. The youth ran away, scowling over his shoulder.

"Never you let a native come up behind you, old man," he admonished me. "'T ain't healthy."

Simtolah House reflected the uneasy mood of its owner. Hidden among its thick, dark trees, it seemed to stand on guard, to apprehend some kind of surprise. Danzy took me to its back door, where a second vicious fox terrier raged across the entrance. He had to subdue it before I could enter, and he warned me not to touch it. He had trained the dogs in accordance with his own theories, and one of them was always with him, while the other guarded his home. To avoid poisoning, he taught them to eat nothing from another's hand. He taught them to fly viciously at any native, anywhere, without word of command. He never permitted them to run off the leash and no man might safely pass one unless Danzy were present to control the dog.

Danzy lived in only two of the many rooms of Simtolah House, the ones which faced toward the bush-hidden servants' quarters. The larger room which opened on a small veranda had once been a dining room. Along one wall still stood a huge, old-fashioned buffet or sideboard, which Danzy used as a catchall.

He moved to the heavy table in the center of the room

and offered me a chair facing the door. The end of the table had been cleared off for the serving of meals. An oil lamp with a green shade stood at the edge of this clearing, and beside it was a huge family Bible and a large reading glass. Ink bottles, pens, old magazines, dog collars, leashes, and pieces of clothing piled the rest of it almost shoulder-high.

Danzy pushed a dusty siphon under the buffet with his foot and pointed to two pictures on the whitewashed walls. They were large framed portraits in oils of a very beautiful woman and a man in officer's uniform—his right arm gone below the elbow.

"That's me mother, Victoria Elvirez Danzy; and beside her is me father—Cap'n Danzy. 'Mad' Danzy, they called him."

The inner room, which opened off the dining room, was very small and in striking contrast with the other. It held a soldier's cot against the wall, a washstand, a neat chest of drawers, and—at the head of the cot—a rifle stand which supported fully fifteen firearms. There were army rifles, elephant guns, and small-caliber arms; there were shotguns, fowling pieces, and old-fashioned muskets; and there were several kinds of revolvers and pistols. All of this arsenal was in the best of condition, oiled and ready for use. And along the wide shelf behind each piece was neatly piled an ample store of appropriate ammunition.

Danzy carefully inspected the room and moved over to try the heavy iron grilles which protected the window. He tried, too, the barred windows in the dining room and investigated the doors which led into the other part of the

house. The large buffet stood in front of one of these exits, and another door at the end of the room was barred, top and bottom, with padlocked bands of iron.

He was interrupted by the distant boom of the noonday gun from the barracks in Almora. Without thinking, he reached into his pocket for a watch, came to with a start, and a frown momentarily passed over his face. "Better run along, old man. Y'r mother'll be wonderin'. . . ."

The unoccupied part of Simtolah House was a challenge to me, and several times I tiptoed around to the front to peek through the unwashed windows. The shrubs in the garden were tall and thick with neglect, masking the barred house, and the deodars cast gloom around the weed-grown yard.

My stealthy inspection disclosed a fully furnished home, with rugs on the floors and pictures on the walls. Beds were neatly made up, and the placing of chairs, the tongs, and bellows at the fireplace made it appear that someone had only stepped out for a moment. But over everything lay the dust of many years. I remembered to look for a timepiece of some sort. But there wasn't any.

As Bob and I grew in intimacy with Danzy, the mystery of the big house only deepened. We were almost daily in Danzy's part of it. One afternoon we watched the old fellow cleaning his guns and rearranging them. When we asked why he never hunted with them he replied evasively, "My huntin' days are over, I suppose." And he added with a shudder, "A gun is a wicked thing."

The only native permitted in Danzy's quarters was his

number one, the Mohammedan cook, Hosini. He came smiling toothlessly, and dry-washing his hands; but under no circumstances could the native either enter or leave without permission, and always the dogs gave full-throated warning of his approach.

One evening Danzy surprised us all. He ate dinner with us and then, contrary to his usual custom, sat on in the veranda until we children had gone to bed. It was long after dark. The grownups spoke quietly at their end of the porch, and we children lay wide-awake at the other end, listening to them.

The bright, tranquil Indian stars seemed near enough to touch and the pines below us rustled quietly in the light night breeze. Out on the distant mountains the red carpets of the charcoal burners' fires moved and danced. Straight across the dark valley from us, on the neighboring peak of Kali Mut, a single yellow spot of light winked cynically, the light in the little stone temple which crowned the topmost rocky crag of Kali Mut.

Danzy had apparently been watching its blinkings for some time, for he suddenly shook his fist at it. "Wink y'rself sick, you wicked priest! Neither you, nor anyone, will touch me for a good time yet!"

My parents were silent until Danzy recovered himself, but he was confused and apologetic. "Oh, I say, I'm very sorry—can't seem to help it. Awfully sorry—"

When he got up to go, he laughed nervously, begging



Father to take no notice of his outburst. The priest of Kali Mut, he said, had done him a bad turn once. The light always reminded him of an evil eye and got under his skin.

That was the first hint of a possible reason for Danzy's style of life. It seemed strange that distant Kali Mut should have any connection with Simtolah. Long after the temple light went out, my parents puzzled over it. Danzy's arsenal which was ready but never used, the unlovely den he lived in, the hand-wringing Hosini, all touched in some way the lonely temple across the valley.

Next morning, Kali Mut appeared neither mysterious nor sinister to me, and I resolved to visit it. But I adopted the safeguard of taking Jowar Singh along; he understood priests better than I.

We left the horses at home, tramping down into the deep valley and up the steep side of Kali Mut by the hillman's paths. We met no one. After nearly three hours of marching we approached the summit of the mountain, and encountered our first surprise.

The path abruptly widened and became smooth with fresh-raked gravel. A stout black fence protected the valley side, and the road made a gentle right-hand curve around the contour of the mountain, and turned sharp left out of sight. We could see only a short stretch of it.

We rounded the turn and found ourselves at the edge of a long graveled yard—an irregular shelf on the mountain-side, heavily screened by trees and invisible from Simtolah Cottage. At its widest part stood a modern bungalow with every mark of civilization. It was like encountering a friend

in a strange city. Everything was well kept. Along the verandas of the house hung fern baskets, green and fresh. The doors and windows were open, and flower beds made it look both gay and hospitable. But there was no one in sight. We knocked and knocked but no one answered.

Finally I marched through the open door and was struck with the extreme tidiness. Everything was dusted, and flowers stood on the dining-room table and in the windows. A wood fire burned cheerfully in the living room.

"Is there anyone here?" I called loudly. There was no answer, and that was queerer than finding the house on the lonely mountainside.

"There must be someone here," I insisted. "Let's go to the servants' quarters."

Every door in the outbuildings, except one, was barred. But as we came out of the house we saw the legs of a white-clad native disappearing into the woods.

"Very remarkable," commented Jowar Singh. "He doesn't run like a thief, but still he goes away without answering."

I suggested, "Perhaps it is Hosini."

The echoing boom of the noonday gun suddenly reverberated through the valley. I hurried into the deserted house to check on the time, but there was not a single clock that I could see.

The Temple of Kali Mut crowned the topmost pinnacle of the mountain. The path brought us out onto a huge outcropping of rough rock. At the lower end rose a large cairn of stone, piously built up by pilgrims through the years.

Toward the high end was the temple, a small stone building, about twenty feet square, with a sharp roof like a pyramid. There were no lattices or windows to give light and ventilation, but the usual wide door served as chimney, window, and ventilator. Even in the afternoon sunshine, Kali Mut was a wind-swept and eerie perch.

Gingerly I stepped into the darkened interior. In the twilight the temple seemed commonplace enough. There were the customary fittings of a Hindu shrine; the polished linga, sprouting a foot or so from the center of the floor, and the statuette of the sacred bull in the far corner. Then I saw that Kali Mut served as a residence as well as a temple, and I made ready to beat a hasty retreat. A fire smoldered to one side of the linga, and in the near corner I saw vaguely a mattress on which a man was sleeping, hunched up in a blanket.

Jowar Singh's shouts aroused the sleeper before I could regain the sunlight, and he pulled up in a sitting posture, blinking at me. Dimly I made out a bearded face with fierce eyes and snarling mouth, above tremendous shoulders and the torso of an athlete. Our eyes met and I began to shrink. But the snarling mouth broke into a brilliant white smile, and muscular arms stretched toward me hospitably.

I made a dash for the open air. I heard the priest calling after me and found Jowaru shaking with laughter. That nettled me.

The priest was amused when I returned. He stretched laughingly and I expected him to rise to his feet. But instead, he began fumbling among the folds of his blanket. Presently he found a pair of oblong pieces of wood with handles run-

ning from end to end, exactly like crude flatirons made of wood.

Still chuckling, the priest twisted his body until he held one flatiron in each hand, then made a convulsive movement which brought him around facing me. Holding his arms stiff, he slowly pulled his body off the mattress. He came onto the stone floor with a dry kind of hiss. I backed away, he pushed forward again and pulled himself up.

When he came into the light, I saw that the priest of Kali Mut was a cripple. The once-powerful legs were hopelessly mangled, and he dragged them inertly across the stone floor. His arms, shoulders, chest, and back were those of a wrestler, but from the waist down he was completely helpless.

"Fear nothing, little sahib," he purred in broken Hindustani. "I am your slave, Tez Singh—priest of Kali Mut."

In a single sentence, he asked me to believe several incompatible things. He was an outlander, his accent was neither hillman's, Tibetan's, nor plainsman's, and he proclaimed himself the bearded priest of a Hindu temple. He was neither priest nor Hindu. The beard advertised plainly that he was a Mohammedan. Tez Singh, a Hindu name, was obviously fictitious.

Yet there was something magnetic about this cripple. He and Jowaru ran through the Oriental conventions for strangers who meet, and I watched Tez Singh's handsome dark face light up vivaciously. His beard was graying but well kept, his teeth shone, and his profile was like the head of a Greek god on an ancient coin. He asked the usual questions with dignity and politeness.

When it came Jowaru's turn to question, Tez Singh made no effort to hide the truth. With good-natured smiles he admitted that he had been born a Mohammedan, that he was not a priest, that Tez Singh was not his name. He had come from Afghanistan, he said, twenty-eight years before. He was then newly crippled and the people of the mountains had been kind to him. As to his real name, he had forgotten it long ago.

Presently I told the Afghan that we had stopped at the modern bungalow below the temple. I asked whether he ever went there and he pointed laughingly to his withered legs. When I asked who lived there, he smiled faintly and declared that he had never heard. Hosini, he said expressionlessly, in reply to my questions, he knew only by hearsay. But when I mentioned Danzy's name, his face clouded suddenly and his mouth made a snarling sound.

It was Danzy who eventually told me about the modern bungalow. His mother, Victoria Elvirez Danzy, had built it for herself four years after his father killed himself in a bad fall down the mountain. That was nearly thirty years ago. It was Hosini who kept the place clean and supplied it with fresh flowers, "for Auld Lang Syne, y'know," Danzy explained lamely.

But it was Kareem, an Afghan leather merchant in the Almora bazaar, who told us the story of the priest of Kali Mut. Kareem was a giant of Afghanistan in the prime of life, with the reddened beard of the Mohammedan who has made his pilgrimage to Mecca. His turban was blood-red, his knee-

length coat was black, and his baggy trousers of the purest white. He was a pious man, but bazaar rumor had it that his harem exceeded by at least three the orthodox number of wives. His sons already overpassed the traditional twelve.

In the early days, Kareem began, when I hunted in Bhotiyal, the man who calls himself Tez Singh came to Kali Mut. (Kareem spat after uttering the name of the temple.) Before he came, he was a man, a lustful, powerful Afghani—such as I am now.

In those days, Tez Singh was known throughout Afghanistan for his great deeds. He could as easily kill a man by bending him backwards over his knees until his back broke as he could eat a whole roast sheep or bewitch a woman. He was prime minister of all Afghanistan.

He was a young man with only a silken fringe of beard when he attained this post, and he was aided in poisoning the old vizier—whom he succeeded—by a woman in the dead man's household. His strongest rival for the viziership was a cousin of his, an older man of the same family and the same blood.

The Amir of Afghanistan, his master, ruled cunningly. The vizier could never be certain of his approval for the rival was never beyond call of the Amir's voice. But Tez Singh served the Amir, withstood his cousin with honeyed words, and fought his enemies within the palace. This sword with two blades, this paragon with eyes in the back of his head, had a secret helper, the eighteen-year-old daughter of the Amir. Her face was like the full moon, her teeth like the milky almond, her eyes like black onyx. Her name was

Amina, after the mother of the Prophet Mohammed. Twice she refused marriage to powerful kings, and once she denied herself to the direct descendant of the Prophet, for her unspoken devotion was toward Tez Singh, the young vizier.

The day came when certain tax measures fell too heavily upon the wild tribesmen, and envious priests sought a freer hand in ruling their followers. Rebellion ran through the kingdom, and by nightfall the uprising reached the palace gates. The vizier marched out to meet it at the head of the Amir's armies, and with him he took the war elephants.

Twice the vizier met the enemy in pitched battle, and after that the tribesmen came in, bringing their loyalty and blood money as before. But in a far corner of Afghanistan a drug-crazed priest and his tribesmen took refuge on the top of a bare mountain, in a fortress of rock and mud with two wooden gates to bar the entrance of the Amir's men. The gates were of oak wood, a foot thick, and studded with heavy iron studs.

In vain the vizier and his army assaulted the fortress. The Amir, angry at the delay and the expense of feeding his war elephants, left the palace at Kabul and came to camp in silken tents a short way from the foot of the obdurate walls. He brought with him the cousin rival of the vizier and his favorite daughter Amina.

In spite of Amina's pleas for patience, the Amir summoned the vizier and his rival. The next morning, he declared, the armies would be divided equally into two forces. The vizier might make first choice, his cousin would command the remaining half. Each would choose his point of

attack, and the attack would begin at sunrise, to the sound of the Amir's drums. The man whose warriors first entered the beleaguered fortress would be vizier, and Amina would become his wife.

Under the fading starlight next morning, the division of the soldiers was carried out. To each rival went his share of elephants, musketeers, spearsmen, and horsemen. To each was apportioned brass cannon and scaling ladders. All was ready and arranged; the vizier would attack under the eyes of the Amir at the front gate, the cousin would lead the assault against the rear.

The Amir drew his scimitar, the blade fell, and the first rays of sunrise flashed from it into the vizier's eyes. With deep thunder the drums began and the struggle was joined. All through that brazen day the competing forces of the Amir battered the gates. Victory hung in the balance throughout the long hours of daylight.

At the time of the evening call to prayer, there was enough daylight for one final attempt. The order was given to take up the scaling ladders. Time and again the ladders were planted and filled with eager warriors, little knives held in their teeth. Time and again the ladders toppled slowly backward, taking the warriors to their death down the rocky mountainside.

Then a great shout of victory arose from the rear of the fortress, from the men the rival led. Tez Singh was touched with madness at the sound. He called up two of the largest war elephants and ordered them put at the great wooden door, like ponderous battering rams. But the elephants would



not use their monstrous heads against the sharp iron studs.

In desperation, Tez Singh climbed up the gates to the height of an elephant's head. Hanging there, his mouth filled with maledictions and his eyes upon the lovely Amina, Tez Singh made a cushion of his living thighs.

"Goad him!" he roared. With all his might the enormous beast drove forward, and Tez Singh fell, a limp and bloody thing. The gate had not given way.

"There is now a new vizier," said the Amir.

In the darkness, the weeping Amina stole from her father's tent and with the help of eight stout men lifted Tez Singh upon a litter. Then Amir's daughter took her lover and slipped away into the mountains of Hindustan where no man could molest them. When his wounds were made whole, the man you know as Tez Singh, once vizier of Afghanistan, came to the temple of Kali Mut. With him was the faithful woman Amina. May Allah forgive them both.

When Kareem had finished his story, I asked eagerly, "But where is the woman now, the beautiful Amina?"

"She disappeared into thin air, perhaps twenty years ago, perhaps twenty-five. But, before that, the strange woman from Calcutta died, the mother of Danzy Sahib."

Beyond that, the men of the Almora bazaar knew nothing. That evening I brought the family up to date on the mystery of Danzy so far as I knew it—though as yet I could see little connection between him and the priest of Kali Mut. I asked permission to visit Simtolah House again, but Father firmly

forbade all further prying into the past. He desired no more trespassing on Danzy's privacy. He made the announcement in Hindustani so that Jowaru, who was clearing the table, might hear it.

But five weeks later the Danzy story broke. Relations between Jowaru and Hosini had degenerated into arguments and quarrels, and one evening Jowaru beckoned me to come into the pantry.

"Have you noticed that Danzy Sahib carries no time-piece?" he asked. I nodded. "Have you also noticed that there is no clock in Simtolah House?" I nodded again.

"Come with me to the kitchen and after a fitting interval ask the time of day of Hosini."

Our own cook and Hosini were in the kitchen. Danzy's servant greeted Jowaru gruffly, but he fawned over me.

"Have you forgotten your studies, Gordon Sahib?" asked Jowaru innocently.

That was my cue. "No, I haven't," I answered. "By the way, Hosini, what time is it?"

The ancient Mohammedan reached beneath his long coat and drew out a gold watch. It was a woman's watch, with a full hunting face and a gold fleur-de-lis pin clipped on the ring. Before Hosini could open it, I put out my hand for the watch. On the back were carved the initials V.E.D.—Victoria Elvirez Danzy!

Hosini's eyes were riveted on my hand. He took hold of my arm, jumbling his words in his excitement. He had got the timepiece for a debt, he said; from a pawnbroker, he

added hastily. Jowaru motioned violently for me to get out. I pulled my arm free and, still holding the watch, ran up the slope toward the house.

So that night Danzy again stayed after dinner, taking out his mother's watch every five minutes, turning it over tenderly in his thick palm. For once no fox terrier was beside him—and Hosini had fled Simtolah, never to return. Straight across the dark valley, the yellow eye on Kali Mut winked.

I think it was a relief to Danzy to talk, to pour out the story which had slowly poisoned him for so many years. His father, he said, had married the most beautiful woman in Calcutta, Victoria Elvirez, a Eurasian. After he lost his arm in the Indian Mutiny he had been invalided out of the army. But, while he was invited to the drawing rooms of Indian society, his beautiful wife was coolly ignored. She was an outcast from both races.

If Calcutta would not accept his wife, Mad Danzy had no mind to stay. He found Almora, with Nepal a stone's throw to the east and Tibet directly ahead. Almora was as far removed from the white man as any spot in southern Asia, and there, to Simtolah House, he brought his wife and little son.

From the beginning, however, his Eurasian wife was homesick. Her native blood gradually asserted itself. Finally she turned to Hosini, and when Mad Danzy died of a fall from a ledge she showed no sign of grief. She wanted only to be free to lead her own life, and as a first step she built Simtolah Cottage for her son, so that she might not be disturbed. At length she built the bungalow we had discovered

on Kali Mut, to be wholly free of her son. And then came the crippled priest, Tez Singh, and the dark-eyed woman Amina, to live in the deserted temple above the house.

The cripple was a handsome devil in those days, and little by little he won the Eurasian woman from Hosini, who then put his head together with the Amir's daughter. One winter night, when the path to Kali Mut was closed with piled-up snow, they murdered Danzy's mother. Hosini looted the Kali Mut house, taking everything he could find, silks, jewelry—and clocks and watches, which were easily salable.

When he learned of his mother's death, Danzy was like a madman. Somehow he made his way up the storm-swept path of the mountain. Shaking with rage, he banged on the temple door and shouted for the priest to come out. There was no answer so he kicked in the door.

Tez Singh lay inside on his mattress.

"Where is my mother?" cried Danzy. "What have you done to her?" Then he saw the woman Amina hiding in the blankets. She lifted her head—he leaped back. Her two eye sockets were bloody and empty. She made a queer noise, whining and mewling.

Daylight overtook Danzy as he returned, dazed, to Simtolah. That house, too, had been ransacked and stripped. Blindly he picked up his gun and went out into the cold. Time had passed when he returned, not knowing where he had been or what he had done, to find Hosini, wringing his hands and waiting.

After nursing him back to health, Hosini told him some-

thing of those lost hours. Danzy Sahib, he said, had gone out with a gun and picked off every living thing that moved. He said that the priest had sent out the blind woman—

What he had done that night, Danzy never knew. The truth had vanished in the melted snows of the mountains. Moreover, he had not known Hosini's part in the crime until the discovery of his mother's watch. When he had poured out the story to my father, he fell silent. Across the dark valley the disquieting gleam of the light on Kali Mut flickered several times, uncertainly—then snuffed out into blackness.

# 11

WHILE THE Danzy story was breaking, and the Young-husband expedition marched into Tibet, life at Simtolah expanded steadily. We were growing up in our mountain world. A pretty English governess came to prepare us for the "Oxford and Cambridge Entrance Examinations."

Because so few white women came our way, my brother and I were taught manners by planned rehearsals with Mother, sister, and the English governess. To them we tipped our solar topees, as they paraded up and down the front terrace; or rose as they entered or left the drawing room; or recovered their handkerchiefs, dropped for our benefit; or seated them at table, as they patiently stood awaiting our gentlemanly reactions.

One other thing we had learned—unforgettably—at a very early age. In the Orient, the host passes out cigarettes, candy, and so forth by hand—one at a time. I once offered

a native playmate a box of candy which had just come from America. He promptly scooped out the whole works, thanked me, and made off!

Changes in the outside world did not directly affect us: the rise in the number of telephones installed, the increasing use of the automobile, the airplane flights at Kitty Hawk.

The first acrobatic flying I witnessed was at Simtolah. In those days the crack aviators were the golden-headed eagles, whose wings often spread eight and nine feet. Their spectacular performances sprang from their appetite for snakes, the big rock pythons which lived among the mountains.

One nippy spring day, when the nests held hungry eaglets, I watched a flying show from a ringside seat. The sun warmed the bare flat rocks on the ridge where I sat, and a solitary eagle soared on outstretched wings a mile and a half above the torrent-filled valley.

As I watched the eagle's aimless wheelings, a dry rustle at my feet started the dog Nipper to growling. The cause of the disturbance was a seven-foot python which pushed blindly out of the underbrush at the edge of the rocks. I threw an arm around the dog so that he couldn't spoil the show, for I knew the python was nearsighted and nonpoisonous. Nipper whined and strained to see the snake grope its way out into the clear sunlight. It settled down for a lazy sunning on the warm rock, unable to see the patrolling eagle high above.

The eagle spotted the python almost as soon as I. It banked into a wide spiral in order to glide directly over our heads.

This preliminary was a guileless procedure compounded of innocent turns, tacks, and absent-minded dips.

When the eagle arrived overhead it was still well up, but I plainly saw its yellow head and curved beak. The feathers at the tips of its great wings stood apart like long fingers. Even while I noted these details, the eagle poised for its downward dive. Its head lurched forward until it pointed at the rock; its tail fanned upward, then streamlined itself; the wings locked into its body. The killing nose dive gathered momentum. Heading straight for the basking snake, the eagle fell at better than a hundred miles an hour.

The bomblike descent began to look like suicide for the eagle. At twenty feet above the rock, its wings were still closed, its neck outstretched. At the height of a man's head the bird put on the brakes. The great wings unfolded, the tail fanned out again, and the sharp talons reached downward. It seemed less than a foot from the rock when the eagle finally threshed the air with its beating wings, and filled the valleys with sudden deep booming.

Before I got my eyes to the rock, the snake was gone. The eagle clutched it in steel claws and turned upward again with powerful sweeps. The python writhed convulsively. But the game was not played out. The snake had yet to be killed by dropping from a height.

The eagle had seen me, but would not be balked of its prey on the first dive. The second dive was another matter. It flew farther down the ridge to do its killing.

The big bird maneuvered into position, two hundred feet



over a bare outcropping. When it loosed the python, it started another dive—expertly controlled. The eagle's beak was never more than four inches from the twisting, falling snake.

A second wild booming startled the quiet valley, the tensed talons again reached out for the snake which bounced limply from the rocks. Again the eagle rose into the air, flying away to his nest of hungry eaglets with strong and steady wingbeats.

As we grew older, Bob and I became more effective with our guns and regularly shot for the pot. There was one game bird we didn't shoot, however, the black Himalayan pheasant. It was somewhat smaller than a bantam and feathered in sleek iridescent black, with a crimson patch on the back of its head. When it called it said plainly, "*Zuban Teri Qud'rutt*," and no native in our part of the mountains molested it. Nor did we. Its call meant "My tongue is thy praise," and the mountain folk feared to take the life of any living thing which thus glorified its creator.

We discovered that the bird had no fear of human beings. If we lay quiet on the hillside, the diminutive pheasant came boldly scratching through the grass to where we sat. It investigated our outstretched legs, and even climbed upon our shins to peck at our shoelaces. Wild chickens, on the other hand, were difficult to shoot and therefore challenged our huntsmanship.

The little wild dogs of India—as red as a fox, and almost as clever—regularly visited our front yard at night. They

came in packs and sniffed around our pantry, lured by the meat and butter which we hung high off the ground in a square screened box. Jowaru showed us how to attract these shy creatures; it was his idea to save the dishwater from the evening meal, to put it at the edge of the veranda where we slept.

In the first dark nights we saw but dimly the sharp-eared forms which stealthily lapped up Jowaru's bait. But the dogs became accustomed to the visit, and on succeeding moonlit nights we saw them plainly. They resembled the Samoyed of Siberia, but were red, with sharp muzzles and straight bushy tails which they carried low.

These dogs, as well as our own, were the natural prey of the leopards which stalked the hillsides. And of their blood brother, the velvet-brocaded panther. It was our custom to shout and throw stones when either leopard or panther approached us in the daylight to seize our dogs. At night, however, they remained invisible and therefore we gave them no thought.

But one night we had a visitor. It was during the rainy season, which had driven us to sleep indoors, and the water drummed heavily on our galvanized-iron roof. Nipper, our favorite spaniel, was shut in the bathroom which adjoined our bedroom, and he was very restless. The bedroom opened onto the veranda, and a curtain of split bamboo screened the door.

Our three cots stood out into the room from the opposite wall, facing the veranda door. Mother sat between two of the beds, reading to us by the light which burned on a night

table. I have forgotten what the tale was. We lay very quiet, listening.

In such a pause as the turning of a page, a sound from the end of the veranda brought us all up to our elbows. It was an indefinite sound at first, like the beat of a dry leaf against a windowpane. As it came closer, it took on meaning and character. Some living thing was slinking along the flagstones of the porch—creeping toward us. Click . . . click . . . click . . . silence! This was repeated thrice, crescendo.

All attention riveted on the curtained door.

Nipper, in the bathroom, had fallen still at the first sound. Now, suddenly, he set up a long-drawn howl, and the clickings came to a tense stop just outside the door. We could see nothing, but our ears sharpened and groped for clues. In the interlude, Nipper began a whimpering kind of whine. Again, the clicking started; we heard it coming directly toward us. It stopped in the dark, just outside the curtain.

As we craned toward the bamboo curtain, we forgot the beat of the rain, the whimpering of Nipper, and the story Mother was reading. We saw a shining black nose thrust warily under the flimsy curtain—which imperceptibly began to lift. As it rose slowly, the large fierce head of a full-grown leopard pushed through and blinked at us.

The bamboo curtain fell slantwise over its thick tufted neck, and little beads of water sparkled along its stiff black whiskers. The orange and black rosettes on its forehead glared like extra eyes. There was a hint of dynamite in the leopard's twitching ears.

Our silent visitor methodically took in every detail of the room, including the door into the bathroom where Nipper was hidden. But his yellow eyes recoiled from the reading lamp. For a span of fifty heartbeats, he carried out his inspection.

Another ear-splitting howl, like screaming auto brakes, burst from the bathroom.

At the sound the leopard lifted his lips from his great tearing teeth. Then in the new silence, he let out a single rasping, growling cough, and his red mouth opened. I could see his heavy curling tongue. He made as though to push into the room—and then it was all over in a twinkling. The big head abruptly withdrew and the curtain fell with a clatter. The leopard cleared the veranda in a single leap and was gone into the wet night.

A short time after that we saw a leopard, in its turn, stalked by a Bengal tiger. Father had announced a camping trip into the mountains, due west, toward the kingdom of Tiri through the slanting valleys. We struck out in the direction of Nanda Devi, making toward Gungotri, the source of the Ganges. The hillmen's paths were not feasible for pack horses, so we loaded our tents and provisions on the backs of Bhutanese coolies, and brought along a narrow two-man carrying chair in case Mother or Miriam found the going too strenuous; but the plan was for all to walk.

Making twelve to fifteen miles a day, we paralleled the path of the pilgrims who set out like Crusaders from India,

visiting the mountain shrines, Gungotri, and even Shigatse in Forbidden Tibet. There was very little change in the mountains, except that they grew increasingly higher as we marched. The hillmen's villages scattered farther and farther apart, and the rivers and streams were spanned only by swaying rope bridges.

The pilgrims' trail followed the valley torrents, for it was innocent of engineering—the line of least resistance to the bare feet of the pious. It was not marked, like the British military roads, with guard rails, drains, and slanting corrugations to break up runnels, but by the smoothing-off of sharp outcroppings of rocks and the close packing of the moist earth between the stones.

The rocks and crags overhanging the trail picked out its turnings and recorded the piety of those who traveled it, for these were carved into the myriad forms of gods and goddesses. Sitting and sleeping Buddhas predominated, their well-sculptured figures often bright with green, red, and yellow. On vertical rocks were engraved Sanskrit quotations, and the universal prayer of Lamaism, *Om Mane Pudme Hum*, the four characters of which are traditionally done in different colors, to represent the four sects.

In the narrow gorges, the trail led over shelves carved out of the rock. These man-made ledges sometimes narrowed to the width of a man's shoulders, with sheer rock overhead and swift water below. At such spots passing was dangerous, if not impossible, and the gorges rang with the shouts of those who desired to enter. Not being able to see around turns, the

leaders of the pilgrims halted at the mouth of each gorge and hallooed to warn those at the other end of their intention to enter. If their shouts were answered, one party squatted beside the gorge until the path was clear.

The rope bridges spanning the mountain streams were built only for a single crossing, by those anxious to transport themselves and their goods to the other side; therefore the public used them at its own risk. When the spring floods subsided, the merchants who headed for Almora did the bulk of their own bridge building. Bamboo clumps on the hillside provided a source of rope, and great piles of the thin grass were pounded flat between rocks. When the fiber was pliable and free from pulp it was then twisted by hand into harsh ropes about two inches in diameter. A thirty-foot span sometimes required more than 3000 feet of such rope and more than a week of work.

Getting the first strand across the stream was the most difficult feat. It could be tied to a log and floated downstream, if conditions permitted; otherwise hillmen scrambled perilously with it from rock to rock, through the boiling water. But after the first rope was in place, the bridge grew rapidly. I have seen one go up in a single morning, with twenty men helping.

Three master cables were quickly fabricated from fifteen or twenty rope strands. Two of them hung parallel, the third running below and between the other two. The agility of the bridge builders was amazing as they climbed out over the water, binding the loose strands of each sagging master cable

into a firm, thick unit. While this work proceeded, men on each shore made the anchorings safe by piling boulders against the mooring rocks.

The final step was the construction of the catwalk, done by tying the lower cable to the ones above it with a network of vertical strands. Ropes were knotted at four-foot intervals along the top supports and tied in firmly on the cable below. Before the last ropes were in place I have seen laden coolies, and even pack horses, swarm out over the swift streams to make their unsteady crossings. The coolies grasped the side cables, making stiff-legged progress; but the horses stumbled blindly on the slippery catwalk, and often crashed through the sides, to be swept away by the raging water below.

For the passage of a small party like ours, even old bridges would ordinarily be safe; but when the knots began to slip, and the weather got in its work, large parties had to beware. When the pilgrims crowded on by the dozen, the strain was too great. At low water, clothing strewn over the rocks, and skeletons lying in the backwaters, attested the high cost of piety and blind faith.

On the fourth day we made camp on what we have since called Mint Island. Rounding a spur we came into a ravine down which a mountain stream tumbled. Standing up over this was a sheer wall of rock, three hundred feet high. From a shelflike pocket of the ravine the island thrust a sharp point into the stream, dividing it for a hundred yards. The ground was level, thick and fragrant with wild mint, and here we pitched our three small tents, two for us, and one for the servants.

We ate in the shadows. Sunset made pageantry in the sky above us, but the high rock wall shielded us from its direct rays. We perched on convenient boulders to eat, with the stream making symphonies and the mint spreading fragrance at our feet. The ravine was already dim when we put our plates down and gathered in front of Father's tent to watch the bright sky over the rugged precipice. Conversation gave way to evening silence.

Then Father nudged me, held a finger to his lips, and pointed to the crown of the precipice. Presently every face lifted toward the light.

On the edge of the sheer rock, in inky profile, was the graceful form of a large Bengal tiger, stretched close along the ground. He moved imperceptibly across the sunset, crouching and wary, head lowered, stalking some animal we could not see. With concentration and cunning, placing his paws cautiously, the tiger floated toward a single tree which stood like a skeleton almost directly over us. Slowly, as he crept toward the tree, his extended head came up and he gazed into the black branches.

The pantomime was clear. The tiger stalked a treed leopard. The tense jungle drama played itself out at the edge of the abyss. A few moments of uncertainty betrayed themselves in the tiger's lashing tail, his shaking head, but the bewilderment passed. Like the setting of a steel trap, the beast gathered his hind legs under him, cautiously shuffled his paws for a firm foothold. Then, like a whiplash, he made a sudden wild plunge up the tree trunk and out over yawning space. Momentarily the huge claws held against the tree, but the



tearing bark soon let go. The tiger struggled to keep himself on top of the sloping trunk, then as he began to slip dangerously he managed to throw himself sidewise back onto the cliff.

The tiger picked himself up and moved in again, stretched up, as a cat will against a chair leg, slashing with impatient claws well out on the trunk. We braced ourselves for the climax. Would the leopard spring upon the tiger's head? Would both beasts dash themselves to death at our feet?

The servants were not watching the tiger. Someone carelessly clinked the frying pan against a rock, and the tiger heard. In a flash he was gone, melting into the dying sunset.

# 12

ALMORA BAZAAR was haunted by a mad Tibetan named Palkor, who claimed that he was the reincarnated Second Western King of Tibet. For his race, Palkor was slight in build and delicate. He dressed in a loose robe of ragged sheepskin, wearing the wool next to his bare body. This robe hung halfway between his knees and ankles and was doubled across the front. A heavy cotton girdle was wound tightly around his middle, blousing the upper part of the garment and providing roomy pockets for Palkor's food and belongings. His boots, reaching up to his knees, were of thick Tibetan felt which had once been white. On his head he wore a bright-red cap—like a flying helmet, with high peak and upturned flaps. Five or six rosaries of seeds and stones garlanded his thin neck, and a long flute—made from the thigh-bone of a man—stuck like a weapon in his belt.

Palkor was a religious fanatic gone mad. His eyes were small and burned like points of fire. He wandered up and down the bazaar begging from the shopkeepers with an out-

stretched bowl, which was the polished upper part of a human skull. The madman was venerated by all the superstitious mountain folk, for he had been "touched with the finger of God." No one dared interfere with his comings and goings. No one, that is, except Jowaru—and he tried it only once. My guru had developed advanced views about madmen, which were borrowed from us, and were not at all those of a native.

The Almora bazaar was very narrow, and the passage through it with a pack horse was neither rapid nor easy. Jowaru and I were one day returning to Simtolah with a load of flour, and the panniers of the pack horse which followed us bulged to the width of three men. As we hurried out of the bazaar, we came up against Palkor. The mad Tibetan begged from the middle of the road, reaching toward the shops on both sides of him with his bowl. We were forced to halt.

"Ohé, Touched of God!" Jowaru addressed Palkor politely. "Out of your compassion, passage for the pack horse of the sahib."

"*Om Mane Pudme Hum*," the madman intoned, "Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus!" This, the one and only prayer of Tibetan Lamaism for everyday use, poured from Palkor's lips with the ease of countless repetitions.

"Ohé, Palkor!" shouted Jowaru.

"Who feeds me," the Tibetan continued, oblivious, "feeds the gods."

"By your leave, O madman," Jowaru persisted, "make way for me and my goods."

Palkor made no effort to comply with Jowar Singh's re-

quest, and immediately a line of mountain folk began to pile up behind both men. Single pedestrians here and there squeezed past, but the bazaar was blocked. It was an interested crowd that gathered, and the balconies overhead filled with chatter and laughing.

Jowaru spoke again. "Three bowls of buttered tea, and two pounds of parched barley, O madman—only make way for me."

Palkor did not hear. Hypnotized by his own dronings, and his rhythmic swinging from side to side, the madman was insensible to the thronging scene.

"Make way for the goods of the white man, for the sahib, and for the servant of sahibs," said Jowaru, losing patience. "Take warning, O Palkor, I come."

"Nay, nay, Jowar Singh," anxious murmurs arose from the crowd. "Let be, let be."

Jowaru's only reply was to move closer to the mad Tibetan and to beckon to the groom in charge of the pack horse to follow. But the groom refused to obey. Jowaru looked about him and spotted a policeman at the edge of the crowd. "Ohé, Chief of Police! Lend me your aid in clearing this street," he called. The policeman discreetly disappeared.

Jowaru strode up to the madman until he was within the arc of his swinging arm, and still the Tibetan did not see him. As the begging bowl came around, Jowaru made as though to take hold of it. At the gesture the crowd growled. This brought a passing gleam of intelligence into the madman's eyes. He ceased his droning and smiled inanely, snatching his bowl to his chest.

Jowaru seized the madman's shoulders and started to draw him to the side of the road. Palkor's smile faded and the crowd shouted: "Stop it! Let be!"

Before anyone realized what was happening, the mad Tibetan sank limply to his knees and fell upon his face with a loud clatter. Out of his coat rolled his wooden eating bowl, several prayer wheels, and miscellaneous packages of food. His skull begging bowl wobbled crazily to my feet and spun to a slow stop. The crowd closed in on the fallen madman and Jowar Singh.

I thought at first that they were killing Jowaru, for there began a thrashing and beating in the center of the group. I tried to break in but was pushed back by those who sought to escape. The balconies overhead became suddenly vocal with screams and high-pitched shouts. The dust rose chokingly, and I could not distinguish anything.

In the confusion I heard Jowaru's voice. "Give air!" he shouted. "Pigs and dogs! Make room! Give air!"

The pushing from Jowaru's direction soon became stronger than that from behind, and the crowd slowly began to give ground. Presently I found myself on the inside of the circle, beside Jowar Singh. In the center of the circle writhed the mad Tibetan. His lips were flecked with foam, his eyeballs rolled up into his head, and his clawlike hands were doubled back grotesquely. His legs pumped as though he were running and they scraped up the dust and earth. Palkor was in an epileptic fit.

A graceful Tibetan girl, who had been watching from a balcony, pushed through the shouting crowd. She quickly

bent over Palkor and spoke softly in his ear. I saw the madman relax. The girl's movements were swift and competent—there was no hesitation. She continued to address him in an even tone. Palkor's legs came to rest and his eyeballs fell back into place. When at last she lifted her face, I saw the classic marks of Tibetan beauty. Her cheeks were round and firm and flushed with a touch of pink through the tan. Her eyes were round and black; her full lips parted over the whitest of teeth. She was alive with health and youth. She was unmarried, I knew, for the married women of Tibet cover their faces with the scarlet paste of the areca nut. When the paste dries, it turns black and thus renders its users unsightly in the eyes of other men. Her smooth face was attractive to everyone who saw her.

She looked slowly around the circle of surprised faces until her eyes fell upon Jowaru. With his tall turban, he stood a good foot above the others. "Very good," she said in Hindustani, indicating Jowar Singh with a tilt of her chin, "take up his legs. Palkor must come to my house."

The building was more pretentious than its neighbors'. There was no open shop front on the ground floor. When Jowaru finally emerged, Palkor was with him. We found his begging bowl for him, and—exactly as though nothing had happened—he continued his accustomed patrol where it had broken off.

On the ride back to Simtolah, Jowaru was a dull companion. I tried to explain epilepsy to him. But in his mind's eye he pictured a young woman in a robe of green silk. Her glance was open and direct, her motions swift and unflus-

tered. She was not more than five feet tall—slender and dainty—and yet both men and madmen obeyed her.

Her name was Tara, the daughter of Chanti, who was an important man. He was semiofficial go-between for the British and Tibetans in the border disputes and small wars which disturbed the frontier. Tara was his youngest and prettiest daughter.

Jowar Singh was falling in love. The service suffered, for Jowaru placed before Father roasts without the carving knife and brought tea without sugar; but it all caused merriment and not anger, for we approved of the romance.

The down-country woman whom Jowaru had once called his wife—she of the snakebite—had stubbornly refused to mend her ways. Several bitter quarrels had broken out in the stables on account of her shameless intrigues, and no admonitions served to stop them. When we left for the mountains, Father had made a last attempt to patch matters up by trying to persuade her to accompany us, but she was a woman of the plains and refused. On the eve of our journey to Almora, my guru had cast her out. He simply told her to go; she was no longer his wife.

At breakfast, several weeks after our encounter with the mad Tibetan, Jowaru asked to speak to Father on a personal matter. As though for a ceremonial, his foot-high turban was snowy white and freshly wound, and he had stretched a bright red ribbon from the center of his forehead diagonally toward the right, embellished with our family monogram in brass. Jowaru was very handsome in his long blue coat,

molded to his broad shoulders, and brilliant red cummerbund, a foot wide, around his slim waist.

His declaration to Father was embroidered with explanations and deviations which made the rest of us smile and brought sharp reproofs from Father. Jowaru, it seemed, desired to marry, and he wished Father's approval and assurances that his services would be continued.

Father looked stern and cross-questioned the perspiring Jowar Singh as though he were a son. The discussion of his past record was painful, for he had been betrayed by his hillwoman wife, and the woman of the plains had subsequently blackened his face before the world.

"True talk, Sahib," admitted Jowaru unhappily. "But now I am a man!"

"But she is a Tibetan and you are a hillman of Tiri. The language—"

"Sahib, fear not, for she speaks Hindustani."

The upshot was that Jowar Singh received permission to take a day off in Almora to discuss the matter with Chanti, Tara's father. In accordance with Oriental etiquette, the girl would not enter the picture until all arrangements were made.

The report which Jowaru brought us in the evening was neither good nor bad. Chanti, the Tibetan, had shown sympathy and an unusual broad-mindedness. He had no objection to a hillman of Tiri for a son-in-law, and he displayed no inclination to haggle over money prospects and property. But he puzzled Jowaru with a parting announcement.

The women of Tibet, he warned the suitor, were quite



different from the women of Hindustan. Some of them married five or six husbands, ordinarily all the brothers in a family; others achieved high position in the convents of Lamaism, and their voices were strong in the councils of the kingdom. Chanti did not desire multiple husbands for his daughter, nor did he want her to be an authority in the Forbidden Kingdom. On those matters his mind was open. But he insisted that Tara should be allowed to exercise the independence which was the Tibetan privilege of her kind. The outcome of Jowaru's suit must therefore rest with Tara. If Jowaru could induce her to accept him, Chanti would raise no difficulties.

Here was a situation novel to Jowar Singh. When Father took him through the logical steps of a Western proposal, he nodded his head excitedly. But when he envisaged himself approaching Tara, the top of whose head did not reach to his chin, his courage failed. The prospect was dismal and the requirements highly irregular.

Blowing hot and cold, eager for the trial, and then alarmed, carefree, and downcast by turns, Jowaru let the days pass until Father, who approved of Tara, intervened. Jowaru, he said, could take a two months' holiday to visit his blind father and discuss his intentions with his family. So it was decided.

Toward the end of the summer, Jowaru returned from Tiri, accompanied by his brother Deeta Singh, his senior by fifteen years, a man between forty and forty-five, who knew nothing of the white man or his ways. He was the eldest of six brothers, and came to represent the blind father.

Deeta was large, like Jowaru, but clean-shaven. His eyes were set in deep sockets and his cheeks were noticeably hollow. He was not thin, but the bony structure of his face was heavy, like an American Indian. The middle finger of his right hand was missing at the second joint, and a ragged scar climbed from the wrist along the inside of the forearm to the elbow, wounds dealt him by a Himalayan she-bear whom he had surprised with a cub.

Deeta was shy at first, but soon he came to accept the white man and his family. He squatted on his heels at the edge of the veranda and talked with us. In our honor he wore a long loose shirt which hung outside his loincloth. But he was never without the customary blanket, folded so as to make a peaked hat and a wide cape.

He told us that he had spent more than ten years in an effort to find the hillman who had soiled the family honor by stealing Jowaru's first wife. After he killed the man, Deeta vowed, he would kill the woman. True, the laws of the British extended to the kingdom of Tiri, and it was a punishable crime to take life; but it was obviously against custom to allow wife stealing to go unavenged. Deeta would therefore help his brother with this Tibetan girl, and then he could continue about his business of avenging the family honor.

He did help Jowaru. He may have given him courage by word of mouth, or he may have pushed him bodily into the room with Tara, standing guard at the door until the matter was settled. He was capable of either course. In any event, it was Deeta who announced at Simtolah that little Tara had given her consent.

The early frosts nipped the gardens at night, and the oak leaves turned. The rivers in the valleys dwindled to thin silver lines, and ghostlike mists billowed up like silken streamers of palest blue. Snow could be seen on the mountains to the north, the ranges of Tibet.

In this mellow time of harvest, Jowaru and Tara were married.

Because he was an outlander, and his family was far away, the Tibetan ceremony was impracticable. This required that the groom surround himself by members of his family, and all his male friends, for a raid on the bride's home. They took the place by storm, the bride's people and friends opposing them in furious mock-defense. Eventually the bride fell into the groom's hands, and a long flight ensued. The girl's friends followed noisily, and a marriage feast awaited both families at the groom's new home where the flight ended.

To Jowaru that seemed an undignified procedure for a hillman and a Hindu. Tara did not reveal her views, and Chanti, her father, insisted on nothing but the properly signed papers which were to be recorded with the British authorities.

A compromise was easily reached. Jowaru agreed to provide a feast, to be eaten at Simtolah after dark, with no priests and very little ceremonial. He was to sign the necessary papers at Chanti's home during the afternoon. So it was settled, but the settlement left out the many Hindu and Tibetan friends of Chanti, and the shopkeepers and friends of Jowar Singh, who promptly made their own plans.

I tagged after Jowaru all morning while he made arrange-

ments for the feast. Father lent the front yard and veranda, and draped our American and British flags between the pillars. A roped-off space at the edge of the flagstones was covered with a steamer rug and strewn with cushions, for the bridal pair and their entourage. Opposite the seat of honor, faggots were piled, ready for lighting, and in a circle around this fire the guests would feast.

Plain tea and the buttered tea of Tibet were prepared. For the Tibetan beverage, Jowaru bought many sheeps' stomachs filled with rancid yak butter, and this was ladled into the huge, hot caldrons until the tops swam with bubbles of fat. Then the rich brown mixture was flavored with rock salt. In addition to tea there were whole roast sheep and boiled sheep; almonds, raisins, and curdled milk; rice, beans, and the sweetmeats of Hindustan.

When the wedding party rode up to the avenue of deodars at nightfall, they were met with torches held aloft by Simtolah folk. Chanti and Deeta Singh rode ahead, Tara and Jowaru followed behind, all on shaggy white ponies. Behind them trailed the torchlit train of guests from Almora, a procession such as Marco Polo might have witnessed.

Tara sat very erect, astride her pony, with the expressionless face which custom required of brides. The full skirts of her woolen robe fell about her. The flowing garment was a deep russet in color and fabricated of yak wool. Her boots were thick white Tibetan felt. Around her waist was tightly drawn a woolen girdle, boldly striped in red, blue, and yellow, and a bodice of jade-green silk, with a high stiff collar, showed at her throat. Her necklace was of heavy silver, set

with turquoise, and under many silver and gold bracelets shone the green of her bodice sleeves.

Her headdress was a helmet cunningly constructed of three wide bands of black wool. The side bands met in the middle of her forehead, and from there fell across her ears, over her shoulders, and down her back. The third went straight up and back over her head and then down her back. Underneath this, her shining black hair was braided into a hundred or more slender plaits which cascaded over her shoulders.

The full effect of the headdress was only suggested from the front. On each side of Tara's head, glinting in the torchlight, was a wide silver stud, hammered in bold relief, with a circle of intricate design. Inside the circle nestled another, of different design and in higher relief. A bright button of reddest coral crowned the center.

But at the bride's back the full glory of the harness became apparent. A heart-shaped silver stud, similar to the others, hung at the back of her head. Just below the shoulders were three plaques in silver, one for each woolen band. Finally, looping all the way to the ground, were thick circles of jade, turquoise, gold, and silver, strung together with beads and bells and silver chains. The whole piece weighed a good twenty pounds, and chimed like sleighbells.

As was proper, Tara might have been a figure of wax, riding beside Jowaru in his dark tailored coat and decorated turban. But nothing escaped her darting eyes, though they should have remained discreetly downcast. When Jowaru's pony took fright at a torch thrust almost into the animal's eye

by a guest who was trying to get a look at the bride. Jowaru was nearly thrown. A peal of bright laughter escaped Tara, which was muffled immediately; but the sparkle in her black eyes could not be quenched.

Through the throng of eager onlookers, and along the line of torchbearers, the wedding party rode slowly toward Father who stood at the top of the path. There the procession halted while felicitations were exchanged, and Chanti shook hands in the foreign style. Then the party dismounted and Father led them toward Simtolah Cottage and the feast and celebrations which were to follow.

One by one the torches went out and muffled protests rose from the Almora folk shuffling behind the horses, but with an air of great secrecy Father told them to keep quiet. So the dim procession moved silently up the path toward our empty front yard and the place of honor at the edge of the veranda. Like ghosts, the guests filed into the shadows. The bride dismounted and her ornaments tinkled in the starlit quiet. When the four principals were seated among their cushions, our family joined them, and there was an expectant hush.

This was Father's cue to start the show. He walked out to the kerosene-soaked faggots piled in the center of the yard, struck a match, and set off a dazzling blaze which brought shading hands up to every eye. But the gasps of astonishment were stifled by what followed.

With an explosive yell, from out of the darkness at the edges of the yard rushed a hundred natives, Tibetans, Hindus, and Mohammedans. They scrambled from the steep hill-sides toward the fire, like wild tribesmen intent on taking

Simtolah by storm. As they converged in a wide, curving crescent, a gong was struck and the line closed in on the blaze, the wings sweeping around toward the seats of honor. At a shouted command, the line stopped dead and settled, cross-legged, in a circle around the fire. The guests had arrived.

Standing alone near the light, Father made a short speech in Hindustani. Shuffling and quiet confusion broke out on the right, with the hint of hollow drums and muffled brass. Then the last shouts of applause were interrupted by the music of a full Tibetan orchestra. Two types of hand drums beat an exciting syncopated rhythm, while long woodwinds, like clarinets, wailed and piped above the beat. Flutes and cymbals made occasional backchat and a writhing conch shell screamed at intervals.

The music skirled to a nerve-racking climax. Then two brass trumpets, ten feet long, with great belled throats, swallowed the cacophony with their deep growling. Two small boys supported each heavy instrument, and the trumpeters were tremendous Tibetans whose outside endurance at horn blowing was probably twenty minutes. As the weird bellowing grew, all save the drums broke off, and at the peak of the long-drawn notes, the trumpets thundered alone. In mid-career, they stopped, and in the sudden silence we heard their deafening voices running up and down the valleys, bouncing back from the steep hillsides until they died out in hoarse whispers.

Now the feast began. Tubs of roast and boiled mutton came steaming from the kitchen and made the rounds with platters of rice and kettles of beans. Tea and buttered tea

followed. Each Tibetan took a wooden bowl from his robe, to hold the tidbits he picked with his fingers from the serving tubs and platters. Many asked to have buttered tea poured in on top of everything else; others waited until later. The milk curds, sweetened heavily, made a big hit; as did the sweet-meats, which the Tibetans had seldom tasted.

With amazing speed, and satisfied grunts, the food disappeared. Feats of gormandizing were prodigious. The Oriental has an amazing ability for gorging five large meals at a sitting, and then fasting for a week without discomfort, an ability which is essential on the high plateaus and frozen peaks of Tibet.

It is a traditional Oriental wedding custom for the guests to bombard the bride and groom with loud estimates of prospective sons and daughters, and to foretell the birth of the first son upon the nearest date physiologically possible. Often the details are vivid and (to us) shocking, but the bride is expected to remain demure and unhearing. If a smile, or a passing emotion, betrays that a sally has scored, bedlam erupts, and the groom, who is expected to be more sophisticated, must divert the bride. But good manners forbade that usual practice at Simtolah.

The bride, playing her demure part with calm face and half-hidden eyes, addressed herself to Mother, whose Hindustani has always been more useful than accurate, more fluent than correct. Tara often smiled at the originality of the *mem-sahib's* expressions, but her fingering of Mother's dress and the display of her own heavy jewelry showed how well they understood each other.



The headliner of the evening was a Tibetan fortuneteller who set the music going again after the feast. Reciting poetry and occasionally breaking into song, he danced around the embers of the fire in flowing red robes. His bright yellow hat was in the form of an ancient Greek helmet, and he took it off and put it back on in dramatic fashion to point up his prophesies. His shufflings were not unlike those of a bear. Of course, he predicted good for all; his stomach was full and his fee was a good one, and anyhow it was no time to take a fortuneteller seriously.

Just before the crowds melted away into the darkness, and Jowaru and Tara left for the servants' quarters, before Simtolah sat lonely and deserted again on its mountaintop, the fortuneteller finally impressed his audience. Interwoven with the legend of the red ox upon whose horn balances the earth, he sang the legend of Tara, the White Jade Goddess, who brought Lamaism to Tibet. The seer had rehearsed with orchestra and chorus for this concluding number, so it was a professional piece of showmanship even for the Orient, where make-believe is often more real than reality.

The orchestra murmured a minor air which had no ending, and each break in its rhythm was marked by a soft stroke of the gong, which was allowed to die out into silence before the tune resumed. The deep-voiced drums spoke faithfully in cadence, the little cymbals glittered in the intermediate rests, and the chorus came in thunderously with its special, punctuating lines.

Stalking about so that the dying fire lighted his red robes and threw deep hollows under his eyes, the fortuneteller held

wide his draped arms, his body swaying to the cadence of the drums:

*When the gods saw the earth from the star-studded  
sky,  
There was night on the face of the world;  
And the globe, on the horn of the blood-colored ox,  
Balanced sunless and chill as it whirled.*

*That was before there was sunlight and flame;  
Ages before the White Jade Goddess came.*

CHORUS: *Ages before the White Jade Goddess came.*

*So the gods in their mercy created mankind;  
And the earth yielded gain to man's gleanings;  
But the floods and the ox and the sun and the wind  
Brought to naught all the hopes of their scheming.*

*Sorrow and suffering, hunger and pain;  
That was before the White Jade Goddess came.*

CHORUS: *That was before the White Jade Goddess came.*

*Now the gods, growing sick of the wails of affright  
Which arose, from the pain of man's toil,  
To their midst, in the sky, called the goddess of  
white  
To descend to the earth, spreading joy.*

*Came thus the Tara, White Goddess of cheer;  
Hail to the Jewel, who conquers our fear.*

CHORUS: *Hail to the Jewel, who conquers our fear!*

PART TWO

Chanti= Tibet



# 13

THE MARRIAGE of Jowaru and Tara marked a change in the relationship which had long existed between Jowaru and me. My guru had done his best to interpret the plains and the mountains, as well as the thoughts and customs of the folk who inhabited them. Even today I remember his admonitions, proverbs, and bits of native wisdom, and recollect vividly the sights, faces, and events he brought to my attention. But that night he resigned his duties.

For some time it had been Father, instead of Jowar Singh, who paced at the foot of our beds at night. We had outgrown the fairy tales of India and were ready for exciting paraphrases of the classics. Discussions of America were more frequent than those of Hindustan.

Jowaru, too, began to show change. As he neared thirty he frequently hesitated to offer his opinions on native life. I was aware of his increasing desire to be swayed by my viewpoint

rather than to press his own. His "Gordon Baba" (Little Gordon) gave way to "Gordon Sahib," and he often protested that he was only an ignorant hillman. Subconsciously, Jowaru sought a more advanced guru for me.

I met Chanti the Tibetan, Jowaru's father-in-law, in the caravanserai of Almora, shortly after the Simtolah wedding. Jowaru's deferential introduction, and the respectful manner in which he made it, left me in no doubt as to Chanti's high standing. Then Jowar Singh made a short speech which plainly released him from his guruship and placed the responsibility upon the Tibetan.

Chanti was the graduate of an American mission school; he spoke English well in a clipped, singsong fashion. But he was a genuine Tibetan, whose birthplace lay across the mountains to the north, in the Forbidden Kingdom. His function at the border was important. He was vital to the British as go-between in Anglo-Tibetan controversies, for his unprejudiced outlook and liberal conviction that the British could teach much to the Tibetans made him influential in border disputes.

His eyes were slightly Mongol, closing when he laughed, and the crow's-feet at the corners spread over his high cheekbones and tanned cheeks. His chin was firm under thin lips, and he possessed the strong white teeth of the Tibetan. His hair was close-cropped, accentuating the long lobes of his aristocratic ears. Chanti had a habit of lifting his eyebrows unevenly when he talked, and of emphasizing his words with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. He didn't do it in Western style, with the palm of the hand downward, but

with the palm upward, as though he pleaded for the listener's understanding.

When I first met him, Russian intrigues in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, were leading to the Younghusband Expedition; but of these events Edward Anthony and I have written in another place.\* Chanti proved himself a good guru in the international rivalries which he watched from Almora; but he also opened my eyes to the world of the everyday Tibetan.

The process was accelerated by an accident. I was squatting outside the kitchen at Simtolah while our number one was frying his midday tiffin. I watched the heating fat while Jowaru went for vegetables. Suddenly it began to smoke and sputter, caught fire, and flared up hotly. I called to Jowaru who rushed out and seized the handle of the frying pan to take it off the flames.

An agony stabbed at my right knee. I jerked down my stocking and most of the flesh over my knee came with it. I let out a terrified yell.

The burn was serious enough, but not as bad as I thought. Jowaru ran for sweet cooking oil, solidifying it with white lime. A thick application of the salve quieted me by allaying the pain. Mother sent to Almora for the Army Surgeon, and when he came Chanti the Tibetan was with him. It was decided that I should be moved to the barracks, so that I could have constant attention.

When he heard the decision, Chanti made a countersuggestion. Why, he asked, couldn't I be moved to his home at the end of the bazaar? It was near the surgeon's dispensary,

\* *Nowhere Else in the World*, Farrar & Rinehart, 1935.



and there were servants and womenfolk to give me care and companionship. My own appeals clinched the matter. After a short consultation the offer was accepted, and I was packed off in a carrying chair to be a six weeks' guest in a Tibetan household.

Chanti's home represented a curious mixture. It was purely Tibetan, but many of its customs were Indian. For example, in the house the women dressed in Indian fashion and "curtained" their faces when Hindu and Mohammedan called. Tibetan food, buttered tea, parched barley, and boiled meat fulfilled ordinary diet needs; yet the spicy dishes of Hindustan were set before guests whose religion permitted them to eat with Chanti.

The women of the household consisted of Chanti's wife, two daughters-in-law, and three maidservants, who occupied their own quarters in one half of the second floor. My small room was in this part of the house, overlooking the road to Simtolah. I lay near the low window, upon a thick yak-wool mattress with many cushions. Mother and Miriam visited me there, but decorum required that I be carried out to Chanti's upstairs living room for the calls of Father and the doctor.

Chanti's wife had devoted her mature years to her sons and daughters; to her husband and his public life. Her voice was low, her touch soothing, her smile compassionate. She devoted her entire time to me and comprehended the boredom of lying still and the irksomeness of sleepless hours. She stroked my forehead and told me tales of how the Tibetan mountains came to life and why men and monkeys were so

much alike. I still see her smiling pale face, the wisps of gray-ing hair over her forehead, her happy gesture of cupping her hands and suddenly spreading them wide.

She was not a tyrant over her daughters-in-law in the accepted Oriental fashion. Her two sons were absent from home. One studied in a mission college on the hot plains, the other served the British government in Tibet at the risk of his life. The young wives shared the household duties, carrying buttered tea to Chanti in the early morning, helping to cook and serve the meals, doing their part of the housework. But these were customary and traditional duties, not drudgery and there was much time left for chatter and gossip.

The women ate by themselves, directly after Chanti and I had been served; but they often came into my room during mealtime, for a camaraderie and freedom obtained in this Tibetan home which would have been impossible in a Hindu or Mohammedan family.

I had thought, when I went to live at Chanti's, that Kipling's Kim was an imaginary character. But I soon learned that he was a spy for Great Britain in Forbidden Tibet, one of a group of daring and intelligent young men trained by the government in the use of thermometers, compasses, and secret codes. These young men went into Tibet, disguised as priests, pilgrims, travelers, and muleteers; peaceful spies who counted the steps they took over the high plateaus, watched the swing of their compass needles, learned to gauge altitudes by the temperature of boiling water, and brought back the data from which Britain drafted the first modern maps of secret Tibet.

Chanti was an important link in this system of espionage which the British had set up; he had, indeed, played a prominent part in its establishment, and had lost a younger brother in spy service.

When I became convalescent, I was often invited to join Chanti of an evening in his upper reception room. Invariably there would be a guest, and we three reclined amongst cushions on the raised platform in the corner of the room. A Tibetan manservant served buttered tea, dried raisins, almonds, and cardamons in the lamplight, and I listened while Chanti's after-dark visitor brought him news of the Forbidden Kingdom.

Frequently these men were spies like Kim, or messengers from spies, couriers who did not understand the import of the messages they brought. Often they were merely merchants from the caravanserai whose news of Tibet Chanti was eager to hear.

Chanti's chief objective was, as he once asserted, to "show me the inside of a Tibetan's head," and he missed no opportunity to bring me into contact with his fellow countrymen.

The windows Chanti opened to me, looking into the heart of Tibet, suggested many solutions of the Asiatic riddle. His leanings were against seclusion, narrow nationalism, and power politics in solving Oriental problems. His beliefs were founded on tolerance and the practical results of international co-operation. The power of ideas always impressed him.

It was because he believed Tibet could develop only under

the impetus of Western ideas, that its policy of isolation held within it seeds of gradual disintegration and death, that Chanti devoted so much time to the effort of interpreting his country to the small American boy. I was the only material at hand and, unlikely as I appeared, there was always a chance that some of his theories might bear fruit. That through me, or another like me, might be forged the opening wedge which would let the light of modernism in upon the dark corners of Tibet.

A true cosmopolitan, Chanti treated me not as a Foreign Devil, but as a citizen of the world. Before the end, as he wished me to do, I became half Oriental, half Foreign Devil in my thinking. Strangely enough, this achievement of his later enabled me to realize his greatest ambition for me; it aided me to become the first white man ever to join the official family of the Grand Incarnation of Tibet.

When my knee healed, Chanti took me to the caravanserai to meet the merchants, or led me out on the mountainsides to chat with the burden bearers.

My early impressions of these people have never changed. The Tibetan is a gay and lovable fellow, inordinately fond of gossip and chatter, an earnest seeker after amusement. He is inclined to be lazy and stubborn, and he works as slowly as his yak shuffles. When crossed, he can be cruel and inhuman beyond belief. He is capable of stoning an enemy to death, or wrapping him in a green yakhide and then letting the hot sun shrink the hide until his victim's life is slowly crushed out.

It has been my observation that any race is as cruel as its life is bitter, and surely the life of the Tibetan is the bitterest in the world.

Chanti took me into the mud-and-stone hovels of his friends to show me the woolen mats they slept on, the single iron pot they cooked in, the dung fire which served as cook-stove and furnace. He taught me that the food of Tibet was limited to the four items I saw in his own eating bowl: the brick tea came from China, but the rancid yak butter, the parched barley, and the meat were products of Tibet.

On the Indian frontier Tibetans are well off, but when altitudes reach 12,000 feet and more above sea level the difficulties of life are scarcely credible. Summer temperatures go to 120° Fahrenheit; and winter's cold dives to 40° below zero. Because water boils at such low temperatures in ordinary Tibetan altitudes, barley, their only crop, cannot be boiled soft, so it is parched over the dung fires, cracked, and reparched until the grain looks like our ground coffee. They eat this parched grain by soaking it in buttered tea.

Snow blindness and mountain sickness assail even the most hardened Tibetan. For the one, the natives weave fine screens of yak wool which they bind over their eyes by threads hooked behind the ears, and for the other, they chew on sour stalks of wild rhubarb.

They live by their religion, for the country is one of the world's few remaining theocracies. They believe themselves to be ruled by gods in human form, the Grand Incarnations of Lamaism. For them the beginning of a journey, the purchase of an animal, even the lighting of a hearth, is regulated

by religion. Fully a third of Tibet's cleverest sons and daughters take the celibate vows of the priesthood and live in the six thousand stone monasteries and convents scattered on Tibet's crags, valleys, and plateaus.

# 14

FIVE YEARS had passed since my damaged knee had healed, and I was nearing college age. Border fighting had ceased with the termination of Russian intrigues at Lhasa. The new seat of government was at Tashilhunpo, and the supreme ruler was now the Panchan Lama.

During all this time, Chanti—every summer, all summer long—had been steadfast in his guruship, teaching me to understand the Tibetan as Jowaru had taught me about Indians. Now, at last, the border was quiet, and he was taking me for the first time on an excursion into his country.

In the early dawn Chanti and I sat beside a boulder-strewn watercourse below Almora, on the winding trail into the Forbidden Kingdom. We awaited the coming of the caravan which was to escort us to the Monastery of Rakas, across the frontier. I was excited at making my first entrance into Tibet. As our caravan came down the stony path toward us, its skin-clad leader gave us a lusty halloo.

Our host was a tall and swarthy Tibetan with three unpronounceable names. The bazaar called him Kahna, the One-Eyed, because his right eye socket was empty. He was always shaking with laughter and always eating. He seemed unable to satiate himself with merriment and food. So now he grinned broadly, clapping his hands in time to the piping of one of his muleteers, and his loose robe bulged with parched barley, yak butter, and brick tea.

At the customs barrier in Hindustan, where the British officers stopped the caravan for inspection, Chanti and I walked along the line of animals to keep out of sight and to see what goods Kahna chose to take into Tibet. We prodded the bulging packs and lifted the blankets covering them. The object of Chanti's search finally appeared on a man's back, an old-fashioned Edison phonograph with cylindrical records and a huge morning-glory trumpet.

"This machine," Chanti declared, "helped to lure me from Tibet—from its priesthood, its endless meditations, its stupid isolation."

The proud coolie who bore the phonograph set it down on a rock and wound the machine, which began playing, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." The sound was weak and thin, for it played without the trumpet; but every Tibetan within earshot was entranced, and the coolie operator posed as a magician.

"This box," Chanti continued, "is not a machine. It is an idea made tangible; a thought which a man can carry in his arms. There are others—things I saw in my youth: the camera which can transfer the likeness of a man to a thin piece of



paper; the typewriter which prints a book before your very eyes. There is more to these things than a few moments of pleasure, though the stupid priests break them within an hour and subsequently, for many years, stub their misguided toes on them."

By this time the inspection was complete and the officials retired into their customs station. Chanti pulled me down beside him until Kahna gave the order to march. Then he rose to his feet slowly.

"The body of the man who made that music box can be kept out of my country; but the child of his brain is free to go in. His ideas cross the boundaries as easily as the eagles. That is the futility of trying to close the borders of Tibet."

I scarcely listened, for the caravan was crossing the river bed and I wanted to dash ahead of the jingling animals. My enthusiasm was sternly curbed both by Chanti and Kahna. No exhortations of mine could hasten the pace of the caravan by an instant. The change from Hindustan to Tibet was imperceptible, and I soon began to hate the scattered huts and shrines we passed, for Kahna stopped at each to serve buttered tea to his men and to drink buckets of it himself.

We trod a pilgrim's trail well known to those who annually crossed the high passes and worshiped at the shrines along the Brahmaputra headwaters. The season was still early for the pious, but already Tibetan hermits sat upon the boulders and endlessly repeated their *Om Mane Pudme Hum*. For each thousand repetitions they drew a circle in their folding paper books. They scarcely looked up when we passed, but Kahna was known to them and their begging bowls lay

ready. Many of these men were under vows not to eat anything but what came to them from pilgrims, so they formed a hungry, emaciated crew for Kahna to feed.

Less than an hour beyond our noon halt we found one man dead of starvation beside his boulder, and by some quirk the beads of his rosary were looped around the solitary lower tooth in his open mouth.

At early dusk the tired caravan stumbled high on the shoulder of a rock-strewn spur at the head of the valley of Rakas. From the stone arm of a gigantic, crudely hewn Buddha which had been daubed a cold blue, Chanti and I viewed our night's resting place, the monastery of Rakas. From our height it looked like a Maxfield Parrish painting. The valley lay in the turquoise shadow of the setting sun, but the edges of the trees, rocks, and buildings were bright with cobalt. A filmy slate mist vignetted the fields and meadows in the foreground.

The monastery buildings was braced against a rocky crag, with square lines relieved only by the angles formed by its outside walls. These began with thickened bases and seemed to lean and push against the mountain. Five rows of little square windows, sightless holes in the solid masonry, measured the upward sweep. At the foot of this pile nestled the huts of the hangers-on, the oblong boxes of mud and stone where the laymen lived, whose slavish labors kept the priests alive.

Chanti and I had permitted the caravan to get well ahead of us before we climbed down from our Buddha. As we hurried, we heard Kahna shouting to his men and animals for a

burst of speed. Everyone welcomed the end of the day's journey and, in Tibetan fashion, made a disorganized dash for the village. By the time we reached the narrow slippery path between the mud huts, the caravan had already disappeared.

The entrance to Rakas Gompa was a square-roofed tunnel sloping upward to an open courtyard at the very foot of the sheer walls. Here we found Kahna and his men unloading the pack animals in ankle-deep mud. Several black, shaggy Tibetan mastiffs, almost as large as sheep, added to the confusion, and a crowd of shaven-headed acolytes and russet-robed priests stood in the doorways to watch the tethering of the kicking mules and ponies.

In Tibet a monastery is not exclusively a domicile of priests. It is also a hotel. In fact, all Tibetan life centers in the nearest monastery, which is bank, police court, theater, department store, fortress, and school.

After Kahna had introduced us, and Chanti and I had been scrutinized, with more curiosity than suspicion, we were invited to have our evening meal upstairs. The muleteers and coolies scrambled into the flea-infested rooms on the ground floor; but the three of us were led upstairs to be honored by stone instead of mud floors. The fleas, however, differed no whit from their ground-floor brothers.

As we threaded in single file around the edge of the court, we passed the kitchen, a two-storied room, with a huge mud-and-stone stove reaching from the ground to the first floor. The stone grate was waist-high and at least ten feet in diameter, and into it a squad of glistening, half-naked boys fed

pieces of dung. The acrid smoke poured out of the fire door and hung chokingly against the blackened ceiling, and darkness assaulted the firelight from the corners of the room. A huge fat priest, oozing yak butter from every shimmering fold and curve, stood at the edge of the light, driving the boys like a storybook demon.

On the next floor was the one-hundred-gallon cauldron of buttered tea which served the three hundred-odd priests of Rakas. It was so mortised to the floor and to the stove beneath that no smoke disturbed the acolytes who ladled the greasy tea into wooden bowls. The room was like a Turkish bath, and the little pin points of yak-butter lights shone like street lamps through the stifling steam.

To get upstairs we had used a typically Tibetan staircase. Wood for any purpose is scarce, and stone steps are difficult to build. The Tibetans, therefore, use a system we sometimes employ in our firehouses. They cut a circle in the ceiling above and plant a pole in the floor beneath, running up through the opening. But where the firemen use their pole for descending only, the Tibetans manage both ascent and descent by putting wooden clogs at two-foot intervals along the length of the pole. When new, these clogs are admirable, but after many feet have used them, they are slippery and slope dangerously toward the ground. In my economical shorts and snug shirt sleeves, I found the climb easy; but the loose robes of the Tibetans, flowing sleeves, mud-caked skirts, and thick felt boots produced many a banged shin and thumping Tibetan expletive.

The evening meal was served in a huge oblong hall off

the steaming upstairs kitchen. Half of the red-robed priests of Rakas were assembled, sitting cross-legged on yak-wool mattresses. The mattresses were narrow and stretched the length of the refectory, which was perhaps seventy feet long. Six of them filled the width of the room, leaving long aisles between for the use of the serving acolytes. At one end of the hall was a low platform for the head of the monastery, superior priests, and the guests.

Long before Chanti and I went in to eat, the priests had chanted their evening devotions, accompanied by musical instruments, woodwinds, cymbals, drums, and conch shells. The services were sung antiphonally: the leader on his platform intoning a passage, the rest replying with a growling bass response. The top of a human skull, like Palkor's begging bowl, was filled with reddened water and passed around by an assisting priest in a white robe. A few grains of rice which had been dyed a bright yellow were cast to each quarter of the compass as if they were holy water. The officiating priest waved a golden bell in his left hand, a thunderbolt in his right.

Chanti, Kahna, and I, accompanied by five senior Lamas, took our places on the platform before the services were ended. After a five-minute wait, the head of Rakas made his theatrical appearance. He was an Incarnation—a god in human form—the famous Fanni. With two white-robed priests supporting his elbows, and an acolyte in a tattered black robe bringing up the rear with bell and thunderbolt, Fanni stumbled in.

The Incarnation was a small and withered old man in a

bright-yellow satin robe which dragged on the floor and engulfed his hands. His head was shaven and shone blue white in the yak-butter lights. His eyes ran with sores and watered uncertainly, and he spoke in a high-pitched, piping voice, trying desperately to unwind his hands from his flowing sleeves when the Foreign Devil was pointed out to him. He wished to touch my forehead in benediction, but gave up before he could free his arms. He squeaked with delight when Chanti held close to his face the bright-backed mirror which Kahna gave him. Before sitting down, the Incarnation spread over the shoulders of each of his guests a pale-blue silk longevity scarf, the *hata* of Tibet.

To my whispered questions, Chanti made cynical answer. "When this Incarnation was eight years old, his parents brought him to Rakas to enroll him as an acolyte. He could neither read nor write, but while his father and mother interviewed the abbot the boy picked up an ancient book from the floor. It was in Sanskrit, painfully written by hand on strips of palm leaf about the shape and size of a ruler. There were many hundreds of them, doubled over on top of one another to make a kind of accordion of pages.

"The boy opened one of these and found two of the leaves sticking together. He pulled them apart, and there fell out a discolored fragment of palm leaf, covered with notes. Crying out that he had found something, the little fellow gave the piece of parchment to the abbot.

"As it happened, the boy's name was Fanni, and the notes were signed by the name of Fanni.

"At once a miracle was declared. After many centuries,

the abbot announced, the ancient saintly Fanni, the writer of the notes, had been reincarnated. His gilded body had remained in the monastery for all that time; but now his soul had returned to the world in the body of the eight-year-old boy. At once the reputation of the monastery was established, for a genuine god had returned to head it.

"Thus the man you sit beside became a local deity. He has never learned well, he was more often in mischief than at his lessons. As a young man he ran away twice for the embraces of Tibetan women; but the miracle of his reincarnation has never been discredited. His every word has been law to the Rakas Tibetans for sixty years."

The Incarnation, I noticed, did not eat or drink. He sat cross-legged on a raised cushion, telling the beads which trailed outside his voluminous sleeves, and long before the acolytes had finished running up and down the aisles between the lamas with bowls of tea, Fanni made formal gestures of blessing over the assembly and hobbled away. Chanti explained, with a wink, that Incarnations didn't eat—not in public, anyway.

After eating, we were led to the golden mummies of Rakas by a soft-spoken youth, a young priest who might have been a disappointed lover. We walked down a broad stone corridor lighted by butter lamps in shallow niches along the solid walls.

"Tibet's Buddhism—that is, Lamaism—is different from the Buddhism of Hindustan," Chanti explained, as we approached a pair of large doors at the end of the corridor. "It is a difference of diet."

The sad-eyed priest threw the wooden doors open and we stepped into a narrow, long room, more like a secret passageway than a museum of the dead. An acolyte—they were everywhere—ran into the gloom and began lighting countless lamps. Out of the musty darkness loomed a gallery of brooding gilded figures. They seemed to constrict the tunnel so that the walls moved together, and the bowed golden heads appeared to nod gravely to one another.

Chanti led me to the nearest mummy at his right, a placid figure sitting cross-legged in a niche nearly shoulder-high from the floor. Its hands were posed, palms upward, in its lap. The sheen of gold glittered along the stiff folds of a loincloth and the scarf thrown over its shoulders.

"This was once a man, the famous Fanni whose Incarnation you have just seen. All the others," Chanti waved his hand, "were also head men."

We shuffled along the gallery, and though I tried to make excuses to end that macabre exhibition, our melancholy guide took us over the complete circuit, showing us a number of boys as well as men.

Once outside, I asked Chanti what he had meant by his cryptic remark about diet.

"Buddhism," he explained, "came from warm India where fruits fall from the trees into the laps of men. With plentiful food, Indian Buddhism could preach against the taking of life, the eating of meat, could assert that the wicked man's soul passes into the body of insect or animal for punishment after death."

"Transmigration?" I suggested.



Chanti nodded. "Consequently, the ban on the taking of life, any kind of life, was no hardship. But in bleak Tibet, meat is the most important article of diet to the hard-working man. It is essential for him to take life to ensure his own survival. The wise men who taught Buddhism in Tibet were therefore forced into a compromise with the teachings of transmigration. Punishment for sin could not be achieved by the old teachings. So they decreed that the punishment for the wicked man or woman should be the world return of his soul in the guise of man, generation after generation, until all sins were expiated. That is the Tibetan Wheel of Life."

We were alone, now, settled for the night in a stone cell, reclining among cushions on the wool-covered floor. A small lamp gave us light.

"It must be clear, my son," Chanti mused, "the Fanni of Rakas you saw tonight is a man—not a god. Therefore, the modification of Buddhism for Tibetan use possesses grave drawbacks. You can see for yourself how it works. If men and women can come back to the earth after death for punishment, then there is nothing to prevent good and wise men from returning voluntarily, for the guidance of others. If saints may return, what is to prevent the reincarnation of the gods themselves? From my experiences of these world-returning gods and goddesses, I have concluded that the majority of them make bad rulers and worse men and women."

There was a long pause, and then Chanti added: "Tibet is never without at least one man-god who is godlike. Yet the belief is not thereby rendered practicable. A man-god

is too much of the earth, too easily reached by mere mortals."

My head was beginning to swim with all this talk on top of a long day's march. I was too young to see then what Chanti had been trying so desperately to explain—that priest-ridden Tibet could take her place among nations only when the shackles of despotism had been knocked off, that this freedom would not be attainable until the white man and his ideas were equally free to cross the frontier.

I snuffed the light and lay quiet, listening to the sounds inside the great stone shell. Aside from the stamping of the animals in the courtyard, and occasional shouts of the acolytes who kept the fires in the kitchen, the silence seemed unbroken. But by straining, I heard faintly the tinkle of a tiny bell, and the whisper of *Om Mane Pudme Hum* drifting out of the open cell windows.

# 15

EARLY NEXT MORNING I was awakened by the sound of two huge trumpets bellowing through the valley. I jumped to my feet before I realized that Chanti sat grinning into my face, holding out a bowl of buttered tea.

The sun already touched the top of the mountain spur by which we had come to Rakas, and Kahna's caravan was forming in the courtyard when Chanti and I emerged. But one-eyed Kahna was not to be seen. To Chanti's inquiries, the priests said the caravaneer was with Fanni at the top of the building. An acolyte, whose ears stood out like sails, eagerly volunteered to take us there.

He led us up two shining, slippery poles, then toward the back of the monastery, where it clung against the rock. It was dark in the lamp glow, and the main staircase to the top of the monastery was scarcely a staircase at all. There were a few steps hollowed out, here and there; and we soon found ourselves on a steep path cut out of the mountain it-

self. The dividing walls of the cells and the successive ceilings joined the rock; but we zigzagged along the contours of the mountain's face. Lamps illuminated the cavernous ascent and many priests passed us busily.

At the top we came out onto a broad terrace guarded by a low stone parapet. Before us, in the middle of the open space, was a suite of rooms, a penthouse, in which our acolyte said we would find the Incarnation and Kahna. I glanced through the two open doors at the yellow silk mattresses on the floor, the low tables used for writing, the cupboardlike cabinets where books were kept, but the rooms were empty.

We found Kahna talking with Fanni on the valley side of the terrace. There was a business deal being closed. Fanni poured a small handful of gold dust into Kahna's cupped hands while a secretary-priest with a tiny apothecary's scales looked on. At the Incarnation's feet lay the phonograph, its trumpet beside it, and even before we finished our polite conversation, American music poured out over Rakas Valley.

Going down the staircase again, I whispered to Chanti, "Where did he get the gold dust?"

Chanti laughed and turned to Kahna. "Tell Gordon Sahib where Fanni gets his gold."

Kahna patted his girdle where the precious dust lay in a heavy cotton bag. "If you went down these steps as far as you could go, you would see bags and sacks and baskets full of gold dust. They wash it out of the stones and the river sands." He burst into a great guffaw. "I am no such slave. I come along with my noise-making machines—and the gold which other men gather is placed in my hands."

This was corroboration of the tales told in Almora bazaar; tales of hundreds of Tibetan monasteries, each with a store of gold. "But the big nations want gold," I said. "Why don't they—?"

"The Russians wanted it," Chanti explained patiently. "That is one reason why the Younghusband Expedition was sent to stop their intrigues. Now there is a treaty and no nation can touch Tibet's gold without Britain's approval."

"Then what good is it?"

"Oh, it is good for gilding mummies and for other religious purposes; some of it goes to China for bricks of tea, for silks and hangings. But the largest part remains in Tibetan monasteries. You can't eat it—it is worth no more than so much gravel."

"Come with me and I'll show you what becomes of the bulk of it," Chanti suggested. "Except for the necessary purchase of tea, there is but one known use for gold in six thousand monasteries throughout Tibet."

We stood on a cavelike platform in the lamplit dusk, and Chanti started to pass through a large doorway. Kahna protested. "There is marching to do. With your permission, I will go. Peace be with you." He said his good-by in the Indian fashion, but his gestures were Tibetan. He raised his right hand to his shoulder and shook it, palm upward, back and forth. At the same time he stuck out his tongue. We replied in kind, grinning until he had disappeared down the slippery path.

I turned to Chanti.

"Here, my son. Look at this!" We pushed through the

great doorway into darkness pricked with many rows of lamps. He strode ahead of me, but I overtook him at the foot of an heroic image plated with gold and bristling with as many glittering arms as a porcupine has quills. "Here is gold, many pounds of it; and you may multiply it by anything you like up to six thousand."

Gold as a decoration makes a dramatic first impression, but it quickly loses its glamour. My attention wandered to two small enclosures at the feet of the deity, the colored sculptures of Tibet, the pinnacle of Tibetan art. Modeled of yak butter, stiffened with mutton fat, and colored with vegetable dyes, these sculptures rivaled Madame Toussaud's waxworks.

On one side, enclosed by delicate palings of polished wood, were depictions of the Buddhist-Lamaist theology. But Chanti drew me to the farther enclosure. "Setting aside the coveted gold of Tibet," he pointed out, "here is the history of my country. Tibet has fallen into the traps set for it by its religion, by its man-gods, and by its ambitious neighbors."

The little figurines—more than two hundred of them—were grouped in vividly colored settings, like bright marionettes in a dark theater. There was no movement, but the illusion was easy to imagine. Little horses pranced, banners waved, men and women gestured, and a group of shepherds sat about a realistic fire, exactly like the shepherds of Bethlehem.

I picked out the eight wise men who brought Buddhism to Tibet and modified it to fit life on the Roof of the World.

I recognized the conversion of the barbarian hordes of Mongolia. I traced the apotheosis of the eight wicked demons who renounced evil for Lamaism and journeyed to Nirvana to guard the Gates of Paradise.

Two smaller groups in the foreground related to the findings of the first great Incarnation, the Dalai Lama. With Tibetan variations, it is our Christmas story. It was the dead of winter, and the shepherds watched their flocks by night. The wise men searched barren peaks for a sign, and as they breasted a high ridge, they looked down into a valley and saw a frozen lake, covered with white snow. As they approached the lake, a great wind swept down from the mountains, blowing the snow from the ice, which lay before them, placid and mirrorlike. Its metallic surface reflected a modest Tibetan hut of stone and mud. The wise men crossed the ice to the hut and in the hovel sat a Tibetan mother, nursing her newborn man-child, the first Dalai Lama.

"The beliefs of every land spring from the commendable and the good," Chanti said, when I expressed my surprise at the similarity of the two stories.

"Where is the story of the Panchan Lama?" I asked.

"That story is not here, nor anywhere. The Panchan Lama was appointed. The Dalai Lama, who at first held both spiritual and temporal power, preferred to rule rather than to guide his people. He appointed the Panchan Lama."

"But you say the Panchan is greater than the Dalai."

"It was a mistake," Chanti said. "The Dalai did not know his theology, did not know that he himself was the Incarnation of the son-in-law of the Lord Buddha. Hastily he de-

signed his first Panchan Lama as the Incarnation of the Lord Buddha himself."

I laughed.

"When the Dalai discovered his mistake, it was too late. A mere son-in-law could not order the Lord Buddha back to Paradise. So the Dalai has always taken a subordinate place in Tibet."

Chanti's words were interrupted by shouting and the sound of running feet. We hurried down to investigate the excitement.

A Tibetan courier, still panting from his run, formed the center of a group of priests and acolytes in the muddy courtyard. Chanti opened the way to him to learn his news. The word was that a Chinese official was on his way toward Rakas.

This was bad news for us. We had no option but to leave at once. For all my protests, Chanti only repeated that it would not do to let a Chinese official find a Foreign Devil in Rakas. The priests noisily agreed. For themselves, they didn't mind, but the Chinese would be angry and would levy fines in punishment.

Thus hustled, we rode briskly over the valley and spurred up the shoulder of the mountain. We were well past the blue Buddha and out of sight of Rakas before Chanti would slow down. Then we rested our horses in the pocket of a wooded ravine where a finger of pure spring water spouted from a bamboo pipe.

"Since when have we been frightened of a Chinese?" I demanded half angrily.



"We care nothing for the Chinese, but he may punish the priests of Rakas severely for granting refuge to you."

"Why?"

"Because China is still mistress over Tibet."

It was a statement I found it difficult to understand, because the Tibetans seemed to live so independently.

"Straight through the mountains to the north," Chanti explained, "a full ninety days' march, lies a sand-covered city of ruins in whose palaces the caravans now cook their meals. Seven hundred years ago the city was Karakorum, the capital of Genghis Khan. The great Khan, having completed his conquests, turned his thoughts to religion; but though the votaries of many religions expounded their beliefs, he found it impossible to decide among them. So he ordered a competition to which he ordered Hindu, Mohammedan, Buddhist, fire worshiper, and even a Christian, to demonstrate which of the numerous gods was most powerful.

"On the appointed day, the competition began with big words and much tongue-twisting. Finally Genghis Khan called forward an unnamed priest of Tibetan Lamaism. The Lama approached and begged the Khan to take a seat at a table. When he had done so, the Tibetan brought a teapotful of buttered tea and an empty bowl. He placed them on the table, and then passing his arms around, over, and under the table, the priest began his magic. As he spoke the teapot slowly rose into the air without visible aid and poured out a bowl of tea.

"The Emperor was delighted. Impressed by a god who

could make such magic, he was converted to Lamaism and ordered his subjects to espouse it also. Thus, the greatest empire on earth came under the rule of the Incarnations of Tibet.

"But it was the beginning of Tibet's downfall," Chanti continued. "When Genghis Khan died, his grandson, Kublai Khan, ascended the throne of China, and Tibet became a mere province of the Middle Kingdom. Before long, Tibet began to feel the weight of the foreign yoke upon its neck."

We rode out of the ravine toward the Indian border. A troop of gray apes crashed over our heads, leaping across the slit our path made in the trees. A shower of twigs made the horses prick their ears and side-step.

"The Tibetans appealed for help to the Mongolians who were also Lamaists, converted by the early priests and Incarnations of Tibet, and the two nations harried China's western frontiers for three hundred years. But it was like a small stone trying to crack a boulder. Furthermore, Lamaism gave China a more powerful weapon than the sword.

"The Chinese ceased fighting, and the Chinese officials in Lhasa began to show favor to the man-gods and their servants, the priesthood. It became evident that a Tibetan of the laity could win no voice in his nation's councils; the channel of power lay exclusively through the celibate priesthood.

"Gradually monasteries sprang up throughout the highlands, and to them flocked the brightest and best lads of Tibet. Ambitious families encouraged their cleverest boys

to become celibate priests because that way lay security and comfort; if the boys rose high, their families won power. But as the monasteries filled, the population dwindled.

"With the men bound by vows of celibacy, and many of the women taking multiple husbands, the ranks of the unmarried swelled."

Chanti fell silent.

"But why did you leave Tibet?" I asked.

"Because of the music box, the typewriter, the camera, after seven hundred years of isolation. It occurred to me that the world was going forward while Tibet lagged behind. I felt that help for my country must come from the outside. So I left Tibet."

Nightfall found us only a few miles from the Indian border. We spread our blankets in a small Tibetan hut which a friendly horse trader lent us, and long after dark our light burned while Chanti related the accidents of history which had turned Tibet from a powerful nation into a collection of parasitic monasteries which held a declining man power enthralled in practical slavery.

Before the advent of the white man, China's contempt for all "outer barbarians" had sufficed to keep the Tibetan borders closed. Since the white man's coming, Tibet had lived by the slogan: "Wherever a white man goes, an army follows!"

"But there is some hope," Chanti concluded. He reached over and snuffed out the light. "The ideas of the white man cannot be kept out, and someday the men themselves will be free to enter. You are a white man, an American. No army

of conquest follows you. You have gone in, and will go again when Tibet learns the difference between one white man and another. I have good information that the imagination of at least one Incarnation has already been fired with those ideas, and that Incarnation is the most important of them all—the Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo.”

A few months before I left India for college in America, the Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo came out of his mountain seclusion to view the modern world of British India. For the first time in Tibetan history, a supreme Incarnation familiarly saw, touched, and used objects less than three centuries old. To Chanti it constituted an earth-shaking portent.

The greatest Incarnation of them all crossed the Indian border at Darjeeling in December, 1910. The following spring, the British government, as a reward for outstanding service, called Chanti from Almora and appointed him the Panchan Lama's guide and mentor during the Incarnation's stay in Hindustan.

# 16

BEFORE CHANTI left Almora he took Jowaru and me along the Pilgrims' Trail into the Budernath country, south and east of Rakas. Word had come to Chanti's wife that her younger nephew, Manyi, son of her younger sister, must be prevented from throwing his life away. Manyi was fifteen by Tibetan reckoning, fourteen by foreign count.

As we rode down from Simtolah, around the foot of Kali Mut, we saw the full tide of pilgrims in the valley, flowing like a white river among the rocks and trees. A family carried their delirious mother toward a healing shrine, in a crude litter made of boughs. A bronzed priest of Nepal trudged unseeing through the human stream, a naked boy at his heels. They might have been Kim and his Lama. At the edge of the floor, a perspiring fanatic, wrapped in ragged gunny sacking, was advancing by falling flat on his face, getting up, placing his feet where his head had touched the ground, and falling on his face again. His eyes were bright and hot, his ankles

were scarred from leg irons—a penitent convict from the plains of Hindustan.

To avoid the crush, Chanti, Jowaru, and I kept to the hillman's shortcuts and pushed our horses. Four days of travel brought us to our destination, the town of Nathiri, which lay in a setting of checkerboard barley fields and graceful willow trees, at the confluence of a stream and a large lake.

Manyi's home perched on the edge of a steep gravel terrace which had once marked the ancient margin of the lake. The water had receded until the town of brown huts and houses spread in a dense triangle over the flat delta below this terrace. The older part of the town scattered away from the lake, among the trees, and stretched toward the barley fields which ran out into the valley.

To reach the household we dismounted and led our horses through a series of rooms and courtyards. The narrow block of buildings on the edge of the steep terrace incorporated within its walls the village street. In this communistic arrangement, travelers entered the first house and passed through courtyards where barley was stored, and hay packed into the forks of willow trees so that animals could not reach it. The floors of these courts were bare and hard—Biblical threshing floors. Chickens, goats, and sheep inhabited them; and occasionally a sad-eyed yak.

At one place we led our horses through a kitchen of a sprawling house, where three big mastiffs eyed us indifferently.

Manyi's mother greeted Chanti with tears. Her face was

blackened with areca-nut paste in Tibetan fashion. Each of us draped a pale-blue silk longevity scarf around her neck, wishing her thereby a long life. In return, she draped each of us. She offered us buttered tea, and then tied our horses in the courtyard. A half-dozen Tibetan children went running out to the barley fields to summon the household to greet its guests.

The family council, which soon gathered, did not break up until late in the evening. When Jowaru, Chanti, and I spread our blankets under the shelter of a lean-to bordering the courtyard that night, I was full of questions, and so excited that it was difficult to keep my voice to a subdued whisper. For Manyi was gone. He was in the Monastery of the Caves.

Manyi, it seemed, was in love, and his love story took strange turns. His father, Tubdo, was a landowner of some wealth—a rare thing for a Tibetan layman. He was sturdy, sun-bronzed, with a Tartar cast to his face. His cheekbones were high, his eyes slanted, his nose was flat. A thick thatch of salt-and-pepper hair, straight and coarse, covered his head; but his face was almost devoid of whiskers.

Tubdo's barley fields were extensive for Tibet, perhaps four or five acres. At planting time his older son and his son's wife helped him to start the crop. When the spring planting was done, Tubdo's home duties came to an end and he left Nathiri to wash for gold among the plateaus to the north. Simultaneously his next younger brother returned home from gold washing, to take up the headship of the household and to tend the growing barley. Before the

harvesttime, this second brother departed in his turn, and his place was taken by the youngest brother whose duty it was to cut and thresh the barley. This third brother left for the mountains again when Tubdo, the titular head of the family, returned to Nathiri for the long winter.

The sister of Chanti's wife, the sorrowing woman who had put scarves around our necks in welcome that day, was the wife of all three men. This was the polyandry of Tibet. Its aim is to hold intact the precious barley fields. With all the brothers married to a single woman, and all the woman's sons accredited, by custom, to the eldest husband, all heirs to the fields remain under a single roof. The life-giving estate therefore passes intact from generation to generation.

Manyi was in rebellion against this system. His elder brother was married and the father of three urchins. In accordance with custom, Manyi was now required to marry his brother's wife. If he refused, Tubdo's barley fields would have to be partitioned between him and his brother; there would not be enough in each half to support a family. Nevertheless, Manyi refused to marry his sister-in-law.

He renounced his right to the patrimony, but the family's face effectively prevented any such easy escape. The Tibetan equivalent of "What would the neighbors say?" gave Tubdo's family no third choice. Either Manyi must marry his brother's wife, or the estate must be cut into two inadequate parts.

Manyi's solution to these problems disturbed his mother, though it offered a face-saving escape. He had announced his intention of joining the priesthood.



"Very clever of him, too," I said.

"As to that," warned Chanti, wrapping up in his blanket, and turning his face to the wall, "tomorrow you may change your mind."

Before daylight, a mastiff put his cold, wet nose against my face. He shook all over with tail wagging.

"Look," called Jowar Singh from before the blazing dung fire, "the dog welcomes you."

Chanti sat up and stretched and smiled. I took hold of the mastiff's heavy ruff and pulled myself to a sitting position, which pleased the dog so much that he gamboled between Chanti and me until he had to be driven away. Tubdo dropped his early morning chores and came over to me.

In the farthest corner of the courtyard the goats were being milked. They were trussed by their necks to a low pole which rested on trestles, half of them facing one way, half the other. The fresh milk was put into churns and converted into butter by a method coeval with the grounding of Noah's Ark. A goatskin bag, with hair inside, was filled with milk, and the throat of the bottle was twisted and tied. A rounded rock, about eighteen inches through, was placed on the bare ground. The churners lifted the bag and dropped it upon the rock, lifted and dropped, until the hair-flecked butter formed.

When the chores were finished and the sun streamed down the valley, Tubdo led our cavalcade out to the fields. We saw the women make their way to the barley patches, and then threaded our way through the thick willows toward

the escarpment lying to the north—the Monastery of the Caves.

During the ride, I heard about the cause of Manyi's rebellion. His affections were centered upon a little girl who lived in the house through whose kitchen the covered village street ran. The two had played together all their lives. The latest development was that the girl had disappeared.

"A plain case of youthful stubbornness is to be expected," said Chanti, "but such complications—what do you think, Jowaru?"

But Jowaru prudently held his tongue.

By a stream which tumbled from the uplands we found the Monastery of the Caves. It was walled after the Chinese style; a flimsy group of buildings. The rooftops within the wall were peaked, with upturned eaves and the gray tiles of Cathay. We dismounted at the gate and walked into the courtyard. Four or five oblong buildings, with sliding latticed doors and heavy supporting pillars of wood, stood away from the mountainside. I noticed that the monastery wall ran on only three sides. The fourth side was a sheer buttress of smooth rock, about forty feet high, provided by the escarpment.

The courtyard was busy with priests who differed sharply from those of ordinary Tibetan lamaseries. There were no uniforms here, each priest wore whatever garb pleased him. And for the most part they were youngsters, boys ranging between twelve and eighteen. Most of them wore their hair long and braided down their backs.

Tubdo left us to seek an interview with the abbot, in order

to receive permission to talk to Manyi. He threaded his way through a number of priests who squatted outside the abbot's door.

Chanti was puzzled at the confusion and finally gave way to Jowaru's insistence that he find out what was happening. He stopped a tiny, shaven-headed acolyte. The youngster was very shy and refused to take his eyes off me. He fidgeted and made incoherent replies. Chanti lost patience and told the boy he might go. With a last look at me, the acolyte blurted out: "The abbot enters the cave for the third time today!"

After interminable waiting we witnessed the ceremony. Walking under a yellow satin ceremonial umbrella, the abbot emerged from his room. He was a young man, not over twenty-five, with long black hair and a pale, sensitive face. He wore two thick woolen robes, one over the other, and carried a rosary looped around his right wrist. He was bare-headed.

The procession of priests formed behind him.

Without music, and in gravelike silence, the abbot led the line of priests toward the rock wall of the mountain. We followed. The procession halted before a ragged cave entrance near the place where the outer wall and the mountain joined. A pile of rocks lay at one side of the opening, and near by was a hummock of fresh mortar. A strong stench of human ordure emanated from the cave.

Without a single look behind him, without a glance at his followers or a last look at the clear sky of a spring morning, the abbot stalked to the cave's mouth. He crouched

down and entered. Immediately a handful of priests took up rocks and mortar, walling up the jagged opening. In ten minutes it was finished. Only a small square, less than a foot in dimensions, communicated with the dark, damp, noisome cavern which held the abbot. A wooden bowl of clear water and a piece of barley biscuit were pushed through to the waiting hand of the abbot. Then a stone was loosely fitted into the opening; the cave became dark; the ceremony ended.

"You have seen a burial," Chanti gravely answered my questioning look. "The abbot will never emerge from that cave alive."

I was horrified.

"He will receive each day his bowl of water, his fragment of barley biscuit," Chanti went on. "He will live as long as fate permits. For summer's heat or winter's cold, his two coats must suffice. There will be no light. The time will come when his feeble hand will not reach for the water and biscuit. After nine consecutive failures, the cave will be opened; the abbot's body will be removed. He may live for forty years."

I wanted to claw at the freshly mortared wall, to pull it down with my hands.

"*Bapré-Bap!*" whispered Jowaru. "For forty years!"

We walked along the rock wall and I saw twenty-seven walled-up caves across its face. An acolyte let us watch while a thin hand like a bird's claw reached out of its cave for its daily ration. The stench sickened me; I was appalled.

"And *that* is what Manyi is determined to do," Chanti groaned.

The revolt of mind and body was more than I could bear, and I started toward the nearest wall, my nausea overwhelming and imperative.

Suddenly, near the monastery gate, excited voices broke out into a staccato babble. In the center of the excited group at the gate was Tubdo. He held a youth by his long hair, looped securely around his right hand. With the other hand he grasped a shaven-headed acolyte firmly by the neck. The little acolyte was crying.

Chanti burst into the middle of the group and called for silence. His tone carried authority. A boy, who turned out to be the new abbot, dispersed the group and led the way back to his rooms. Jowaru and I followed.

The abbot closed the heavy wooden doors and invited us to be seated on woolen mattresses. He poured buttered tea from a large china teapot.

Tubdo was flaming with anger, but the abbot was clearly inclined to treat the matter lightly. Chanti was peacemaker, but he upbraided everyone in turn. The two youngsters whom Tubdo held presented a contrast. The smaller one sobbed and cried; the larger one was sullen and defiant.

The defiant youth, whose long hair Tubdo still clutched angrily, was Manyi. His face was pale but his Tartar features—like his father's—were unmistakable. The youth stubbornly reiterated his decision: he wanted to be buried in a cave. He had already spent ninety days in trial burial, his long hair proclaimed the fact. He was due to be immured for a second period of three hundred days. After that the choice

was up to him. If he entered a third time, it must be for the remainder of his life. He wanted to see it through.

The sobbing acolyte was the cause of all the trouble. She was Manyi's girl friend from the house with its kitchen in the village street. In an effort to forestall Manyi's second burial, as a last resort, she had accused Manyi of complicity in her own fraud of impersonating a boy.

Chanti scolded Manyi, Tubdo, and the abbot impartially. But from the little girl he drew watery smiles; he could be the most softhearted of Tibetans. A discipline so lax as to allow a girl to enroll as acolyte, he told the abbot, was only one degree less reprehensible than a belief which sent bright boys to burial alive.

But it was the young abbot, who had spent his ninety days and his three hundred days in a foul cave, who resolved the problem. With a smile, he turned the tables on everyone. He said that the monastery could not overlook the misdemeanor of the girl in passing herself off as a boy, nor condone the deception of Manyi in not reporting the fraud to the abbot. He pronounced the sentence of expulsion from the Monastery of the Caves on both culprits.

He clapped his hands and an acolyte entered. "Call the barber," the abbot demanded. The sartorial expert appeared with a chipped enamel basin of hot water. "Shave his head," the abbot indicated Manyi. We sat in the abbot's room while the boy's long hair fell away under the crude triangular razor. It was Manyi's conversion from religion.

On the way back to Nathiri village, the convert rode

behind his father. The little girl—she was no more than twelve—sat at Chanti's saddle horn.

We stopped in the highway kitchen to deliver the runaway to her mother. Chanti stood over the tearful embrace to soften any harsh words which might be spoken. But there were none. The rescue party was invited to stay for the mid-day meal, and word spread up and down the communistic street that Manyi and his loyal sweetheart had been rescued from the Monastery of the Caves.

At sunset came the happy ending to Manyi's rebellion. He squatted with his bowl of buttered tea over his father's hearth. Beside him crouched his shaven-headed little savior. Mists rose ghostlike over the village, dung fires tinged the evening air with their sharp tang, goats bleated in the courtyards. The clatter of wooden bowls and the calls of returning workers brought peace to the Tibetan village of Nathiri. And before we left the fire, Chanti made his suggestion. "It has been a long time, Tubdo, since we have had a man-child in our home. The last time was when Gordon Sahib's knee was burned. Let me take Manyi back to Almora with me. He shall become as my son, and he will attend school. I will procure for him a government post. It will be best for him—and for Tibet, which buries alive those who show spirit."

The little girl piped up. "And I will send with him my mastiff puppy. For his own dog to him."

Manyi's sweetheart was loyal to the last. In Tibet the bride's dowry must include at least one mastiff to protect her new home.

Before the company broke up that night, the wishes of Chanti and the little girl prevailed. Manyi eagerly accepted adoption from Chanti, and declared he would take the mastiff puppy with him to Almora.



# 17

MY LAST DAYS with Chanti were happy ones. I looked upon his impending departure for service with the Panchan Lama as a temporary thing, but Chanti, as though in final summing up, threw open the last remaining windows to give me illuminating glimpses into the mysteries of Forbidden Tibet.

On a bright day we sat in Chanti's upper room in front of his small Lamaist shrine, while he told me of the finding of the Incarnation, the rules of succession, and the nature of the authority of the Panchan Lama who occupies the worldly throne of the Lord Buddha, exerting the mightiest spiritual rule in the world, worshiped by 600,000,000 Buddhists in the lands of the brown and yellow believers.

Chanti's shrine was unpretentious, and he sat before it more for meditation than for worship, being tolerant of all religion. The shrine was a place for the women of the household to visit with pious genuflections and repetitions of *Om Mane Pudme Hum*.

Backed by a red satin hanging, embroidered in gold, the heart of the shrine was a small bronze Buddha, who sat cross-legged on a large lotus, his face serene, his hands lying palm up in his lap. Before the figurine burned three yak-butter lamps, the whole elevated a few inches from the floor. The summer day made the lamps pale, and a warm breeze ruffled the flames and stirred the red satin backdrop.

In all religions (Chanti explained) there is a belief in the Second Coming. The Messiah is the indispensable symbol of man's hope for the ideal and perfect life. But in their eagerness to mitigate a little the bitterness of life, the people of my country will not wait, as others do, until the millennium for their Messiah. They desire him, anew, for each generation. In this they show themselves to be the most incurable optimists in the world, for their Messiahs do not always serve them well. Nevertheless, they go on believing.

Fortunately, they do not always hope in vain. At the present moment, Chanti said, their faith receives its reward. Their hopes and beliefs are centered on the Panchan Lama, the story of whose reincarnations is full of significance.

In the beginning the selection of the Panchan Lama was a matter of politics. The Chinese yoke rested heavily upon the necks of the Tibetans and it became the custom to find the newly incarnated Panchan among the tribes which fought most fiercely against China. For five centuries, China hesitated to intervene.

Then the regents of Tibet fell into palpable error. A Panchan Lama had died, and it was announced that his successor would be the unborn child of a Mongolian princess, whose

husband waged unremitting war against China's western borders. But the regents miscalculated, for the princess gave birth to a daughter.

At this time the great emperor Ch'ien Lung sat upon the Dragon Throne and he showed himself to be a great statesman. He did not ridicule the regents for their mistake; he did not dispatch a punitive expedition against Tibet. Instead, he sent a caravan of two thousand camels, loaded with rich gifts—silk and gold and tea—headed by the biggest man in his empire. As the crowning act, the Emperor's ambassador presented the Tibetan regents with a vase of solid gold, cunningly carved and embellished—the *Bumba*. With it went a set of rules for its use, which the flattered regents accepted without demur. By Ch'ien Lung's rules, politics were forever barred from the choice of the succession of the two Grand Incarnations—the Panchan Lama, and his subordinate, the Dalai Lama. The rules left the final choice to a public casting of lots, not unlike a sweepstakes, a procedure found in many religions.

Chanti sat cross-legged before his bronze image, swaying gently back and forth as he talked. That, he continued, is how the Panchan Lama, whose guide in Hindustan I am to be, was chosen. His predecessor died in 1879, in March—a dreary month of cold and blizzard. As he lay dying, the priest city of Tashilhunpo was hushed, its three thousand russet-clad monks huddled indoors, speaking in whispers, or walking through the long galleries with bowed heads and down-cast eyes.

The Grand Incarnation had last been seen in public at the

New Year celebrations and Devil Dance, on which occasion he occupied his throne on the balcony overlooking the great monastery court. This court is a tremendous quadrangle, surrounded on all four sides by the three-storied palace of the Panchan. Three tiers of balconies completely encircle the courtyard, gaily painted in reds and bright yellows. At the end of the court, on the second balcony, is a large platform which juts out over the flagstones below like a Shakespearean stage. It is the throne of the Incarnation.

On that last appearance the Panchan Lama was seen to be an old and ailing man. His body was large and his face serene. But his legs—from much cross-legged sitting—were swollen and deprived of their ordinary functions. Two priests carried him to and from his throne. His hands shook with a slow, persistent palsy.

Now he lay dying in the great hall off the balcony. A large assembly of priests stood whispering in groups at the darkened end of the room. In the center of the stone floor, where the weak wintry light was strongest, was the couch of the dying Incarnation, raised two feet off the floor, draped with yellow satin brocade and yak-wool quilts covered with yellow silk. Red and yellow cushions supported the Panchan Lama's head.

A young priest in russet robe, his face pitted with smallpox, stood at the head of the couch. He was the regent, charged with the interim rule and the finding of the new Incarnation.

Two abbots, with bright-yellow helmets on their heads, took their post at the foot of the deathbed. A fourth priest,

robed in white, leaned over the dying man, massaging the Panchan Lama's neck with deft fingers, rubbing from the collarbone up toward the chin.

The light of the winter afternoon died, and the acolytes brought lamps to be placed around the couch. The priest in white continued his administrations. The figure on the couch made an attempt to speak, but the death rattle came. The priest stopped his massaging and turned toward the end of the room.

"The spirit has flown," he announced.

At once the monastery was roused into action. In the courtyard below the conch shells cried like fiends, and a prolonged groaning went up from every window. At length the conches died before the rise of orchestral music. A deep-voiced priest in the darkness below boomed out a long monologue, answered by the chorused growl of a multitude of monks sitting in the blackness of their stone cells. The soul of the Panchan Lama was launched upon its journey through bardo, the Tibetan purgatory.

It was to speed the beginning of this journey that the white-robed priest had done his massaging. In the Lamaist philosophy, the spirit of man enters his body through the soft spot in his baby head. When death comes, the spirit escapes at the same point, and to help it the massage runs from collarbone to chin.

The journey of the spirit through bardo is beset with difficulties, and the priests of Tashilhunpo aid their Panchan Lama in traversing it. They set up a tall wooden post and drape on it the clothes of the deceased. Day and night, a

succession of monks sits cross-legged before this crude effigy, reading directions from the Book of the Dead so that the soul may escape the myriad pitfalls.

In purgatory, everything is reversed. The things that are tangible on earth—stones, rocks, and mountains, monasteries, and the bodies of men—have no substance. But the intangible thoughts of earth are materialized in purgatory. To think a thought in that shadowy land is to have it materialize before the eyes. Thoughts take on bone and sinew. If a man's spirit thinks of a dagger in the side of his enemy, the enemy lies before him with a bloodstained dagger between his ribs.

The soul wanders in bardo for one hundred and forty-nine days. The most difficult test comes on the last day, when there must remain in the spirit's thoughts neither anger, envy, hatred, nor lust. It is the test of the spirit's fitness to enter Nirvana. If it is found wanting, the spirit must return again to earth for another lifetime.

That is ordained for ordinary spirits. The soul of the Lord Buddha, however, returns willingly, generation after generation, in the human body of its Incarnation. On the one hundred and forty-ninth day, the divine spirit enters the body of a baby boy at the moment of its conception.

It is the task of the regent to find the authentic man-child whose mortal body contains the immortal spirit of the world-returning Buddha. Four hundred and thirty-two days after the death of the Incarnation, somewhere in Tibet is born the baby boy in whose body the divine spirit has taken up its abode.

In May, 1881, the wise men took up a census of boy babies

born on the appointed day, in every village and tent of Tibet. Mothers from the highlands, from the marshy plains and the valleys, made their reports.

There were certain signs for which the regent sought. A purple birthmark like the stripes of a tiger, signifying courage, might constitute such a sign. Long lobes to the ears, denoting wisdom, might be the fateful portent. Or two bumps on the shoulder blades, the budding third and fourth arms of the Lord Buddha. Or a tiny tooth or two, showing at birth.

When physical signs fail to disclose the reincarnation, other omens are relied on. With his first breath the chosen man-child has been known to utter the name of the last Incarnation. Sometimes an earthquake, a landslide, or a darkening of the sun or moon has accompanied the authentic birth.

In cases of doubt the babies are frequently seated in groups at a table upon which are placed half a dozen small articles, among them an object which has been in the possession of the late Incarnation. The baby boy who first reaches for this article has the strongest claim to authenticity.

By midsummer, 1883, the regent had investigated every claim. He had met with his council who aided him in eliminating the claims of all but three baby boys. The fateful drawing of lots was approaching, and a date in harvesttime was chosen.

The autumn day dawned frostily. The great courtyard at Tashilhunpo was close-packed before sunrise and the three balconies surrounding it were thronged by Tashilhunpo priests in russet robes, yellow helmets on their heads. The

throne on the second balcony was draped with yellow satin. Near the front railing was a table on which the great golden *Bumba* stood alone, for all to see.

When the sun rose, the regent and his council filed out on the balcony and a hush fell upon the crowds below. Over the heads of the congregation, the regent spread his arms, and droned his prayers and incantations. There was no music, and when the voice stopped, a whispering sigh escaped the crowd. Now the regent read aloud the names of the three candidates.

A shaven-headed clerk wrote each name on an oblong piece of white rice paper, and handed each one back to the regent who rolled it between his palms, from top to bottom, like a spill. Manipulating the three white cylinders between his palms to shuffle them, the regent averted his face from the heavy gold vase. A priest guided his moving hands and the regent dropped the papers into the *Bumba*.

Pulling back the full sleeve along his right arm, the regent inserted his hand into the vase, then pulled it out, grasping the ballot on which was written the name of the next Incarnation.

There was no sound in the crowded court, no sound on the balconies. The regent unrolled the ballot and read in a clear voice: "Chos'gyi Nyima, Panchan Rinbochhi of Tashilhunpo!"

A tremendous roar greeted the reading of the name of the new Panchan Lama. The Incarnation was only two years old, but his marks were those of wisdom—for the lobes of his tiny ears were long and handsome. He came from Amdo



province in northeast Tibet where his father was a wood-chopper in the mountains. His mother, a sturdy woman with an older son, kept house in a stone and mud hut beside a stream.

According to Tibetan custom, the baby Incarnation nursed at his mother's breast until he was four years old, and then the regent and his retinue came to the mountain hut to escort him to his palace at Tashilhunpo. His family were ennobled, given titles, lands, and riches. The older brother, a lad of six, was made governor of a province. The baby laughed and went willingly into the arms of the regent. It was the last time he was to see any of his family privately. That was in 1885.

For fourteen years he was taught to read and write, to memorize the two hundred and twelve books of Tibetan scriptures and commentaries, to learn to conduct the hundred and fifty Lamaist ceremonials. He had to become letter perfect in the history and detail of his former Incarnations, so perfect that he could live his former lives with the same realism that he did his present Incarnation.

And so, in 1899, when he was eighteen, the Panchan Lama ascended the worldly throne of the Lord Buddha to rule over the spiritual destinies of nearly a third of the people of the world.

As Chanti finished his story, I looked at the little bronze Buddha in the shrine.

"What," I asked, "happens if the Panchan Lama turns out to be a dolt?"

Chanti smiled. "It has happened more than once. But fate intervenes. The dolt finds a means of entering upon his next Incarnation at once."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the regents, though young, are carefully chosen for their intelligence. The people of my country are skilled in the uses of poison." Chanti got to his feet. "The system lacks subtlety, but it is sometimes preferable to a generation of misrule. Poison has its place. It is a pity that other countries don't avail themselves of it."

We walked down the stairs to the street. The bazaar was busy. I bade Chanti a careless good-by and led my pony through the crowds. That was the last time I ever saw my Tibetan guru.

My next native teacher was to be the Panchan Lama himself. At his side, thanks to Chanti of Almora, I shared to its end the extraordinary life of one of the greatest of all Tibetan Incarnations.



# Interlude



NO LIFE lends itself to the convenient pattern of a book. It has to be cut here and there if the story is to emerge. Therefore, in sketching the events which came about through my meeting with the three Orientals who taught me most about the East, and in setting down the lessons I learned from them, it has been necessary here and there to follow the Bellman's example. For you will remember his wise response when his hearers complained of the length of his story—"I will skip forty years," cried the Bellman in haste.

There was to be a long interval after Chanti resigned his guruship until I found my third teacher. And during that time not only the course of my own life, but that of the world I lived in, changed beyond recognition. It was natural, perhaps, that I was more aware of the changes which affected me personally than I was of the vast changes whose effects were not felt so immediately.

Something of the events of those intermediate years must be set down, however briefly, because they contained within

them the seed of all that followed. If there seems to be overmuch of the struggle of nations, it is because no man's life today can be considered apart from the fate of nations, and the ideas on which nations are based. His own fate is too inextricably bound up in the survival or the destruction of certain basic ideas.

The year Chanti left to be guide to the Panchan Lama in Hindustan, my father died. He lies buried in a small plot, not far from the Grand Trunk Road, beside three little white children. Jowar Singh filled big wooden cases with Father's books, in preparation for our return to the United States, and Mother            the last few hours before the train left delivering a            for the gardener's child wife. As we sailed from Calcutta one hot morning, Jowaru and Tara waved good-by, weeping unashamed.

For the next few years I lived in America, looking back over my shoulder at the Orient. College was a transition time. The First World War was a temporary detour. Before America declared war on Germany, I had left school and joined the French Foreign Legion as an airplane pilot. Then, with the entry of the United States, I was transferred to the American air force in France.

One winter's day I came tumbling out of the sky from three thousand feet, near the little Brittany village of Savenay. The left side of my airplane had crumpled and I had no parachute. I was reported dead; but days later, in a small local hospital, Elizabeth Crump found me alive. She was a Red Cross searcher, whose duty it was, in her gray uniform

with the blue tabs, to give razor blades, toothbrushes, and a score of other things to the wounded. She sat at the bedsides of the dying and wrote last messages home. She attended funerals and checked on the daily list of those reported dead, missing, and prisoners of war.

I fell in love with her, and we were married in the Hôtel de Ville in La Rochelle on April 22, 1919. It was a scandalous business. First, I had to bribe *Monsieur le Procureur de la République Française* with two hundred American cigarettes to dispense with the usual fourteen-day waiting period required by French law. Then I went to the *mairie* to make preliminary entries in the city's archives. Not knowing the name of my wife's mother, nor where her relatives unto the third and fourth generations had been born, I had back upon the safe name of Brown and such improbable localities as Poughkeepsie and Schenectady. But I am convinced that we were properly married, though the town clerk could not pronounce Poughkeepsie and Schenectady, the janitor had to be pressed into service as a witness, I had prevaricated to the archives, and the town clerk mumbled his lines.

After the war I was too old to go back to school and too young to understand postwar America, and homesick for the East. I took the civil-service examination for Clerk to Trade Commissioner, under the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. After four months' schooling in Washington, I was posted to the Orient. I fully expected to be sent back to India, but I was ordered instead to the American Legation in Peking, where I joined the legation staff as assistant to the Commercial Attaché.



Although I had been deeply disappointed at being assigned to China rather than India, I found that I arrived in Peking like an Oriental returning home. Much of it was new to me, but I had no sense of strangeness, such as assailed my wife during the first weeks. My years in India helped to throw light on the Chinese scene, so that I felt from the beginning that I belonged there.

Of my labors on behalf of America I can say little, for I was deputy subassistant doormat in the legation and I saw only the small clogs of the diplomatic machine.

My last government service came in 1923, when I sat as an American delegate to the China Tariff Revision Commission at Shanghai.

After I made my report in Washington I went into business, selling American cotton to Chinese and Japanese mill operators. Then I became China manager for the Carnation Milk Company, with a territory which ran from Siberia to Siam, including a supervisory control over Japan.

Time and again I ranged over that territory, coming to know well between two and three thousand small shopkeepers scattered all over East Asia, an experience that provided me with a yardstick I needed in understanding China. At the same time I was plodding along with books, teachers, and talk, seeking a deeper knowledge of China, a process by no means finished, even after eighteen years.

I was laboriously learning the language and, though in time I managed to speak Chinese, I have never ceased to be rather amusing to the Chinese who listen to me.

Chinese is a highly inaccurate language for the twentieth

century. Each locality makes up its own peculiar names for new inventions, articles of trade, and so forth. For this reason, businessmen, making contracts with the Chinese, draw up their documents in Chinese and English, placing at the end the legend that in case of differences the English version shall be the official one.

Although I traveled widely in China, I could not see the major trends for the details immediately before me. The individual sights and sounds and smells were familiar because of my life in Hindustan, but of the Chinese as a whole I knew nothing at all.

In that pre-Chiang Kai-shek China, it was unpleasant to walk the streets of a newly conquered city. The winning warlord filled it with executioners carrying long-handled swords—each headsman accompanied by a squad of soldiers. These executioners slowly paraded the streets, grabbing coolies and poor-looking folk, making them kneel down, and then beheading them, “to encourage the others.” Many a time I’ve spent a whole day of business dodging around these executioners’ squads to avoid witnessing their promiscuous beheadings.

The China I knew during the first ten years had neither shape nor form. It was infested by bandits, a prey to civil war; the authority of the recognized government seldom extended beyond the cities of Peking and Tientsin. China seemed a formless, schemeless heap of struggling maggots, and for the first two years I condemned it with the easy superficiality of ignorance.

As a businessman I kept accounts in eight different cur-

rencies, and learned to make quotations in a dozen others. Experience taught me that trade was impossible in at least a third of my territory at all times, because of civil war and banditry. It became a commonplace to discover that owing to taxes and transport difficulties, shipments could not be made at the last moment. The country was ruled by warlords who resembled feudal barons, and who changed the rules of business whenever it pleased them. These were only surface symptoms, however, and their underlying causes remained obscure to me.

For ten years I spent at least nine months of each year traveling—sometimes with my wife, sometimes alone, with Betty waiting for my return in our house in Shanghai. I covered territory from Siberia to South China, and from Japan to the borders of Tibet, visiting all manner of out-of-the-way places. On these trips I always encountered the Japanese, the fifth columnists of the Mikado. Some of them assumed Chinese dress and revolved in the orbit of the Chinese warlords. Others kept hotels, barbershops, and small retail shops. Some married Chinese women, and others brought their Japanese wives and families to China with them.

They were thickest along the Siberian borders, but I found them on the edges of inner Mongolia, throughout North China, and even toward the mountains of Tibet in the west.

Japan was afraid of a united China; she dared not try to enforce her will upon a single-minded nation of four hundred million people: she was teaching Hitler his tricks of

dividing and conquering. Secondly, she was setting a trap for the Western Powers, patiently awaiting the day when it would be possible to tell the West to step aside and let Oriental Japanese do the job of pacifying China. The keystone of Japan's policy, in short, was to prevent the unification of China.

In those days neither the Orient nor the Occident recognized Japan for the totalitarian state that it is. While Japan was thinking in terms of total mobilization of mass power and industry for total war, the rest of the world still thought in terms of small professional armies and navies. Furthermore, Japan had had centuries of experience in running secret services and controlling spies. Her network of spies, fifth columnists, and saboteurs constituted a secret weapon which was one of the major factors in Japan's subsequent adventures on the Asiatic mainland.

During those years I unwittingly saw Japan put into practice all the theories and machinations of totalitarianism long before the same principles were adopted by the Western aggressor nations. In trying to enforce its will upon China, Japan gave a stiff, practical test to every method of totalitarian encroachment—providing Hitler and Mussolini with a full manual of proved techniques.

During the summer of 1926 Chiang Kai-shek launched the revolutionary anti-Peking expedition from Canton. Few of us realized then that Chiang's rebellion was not against China, but against Japan. By March, 1927, his troops had reached Nanking and Shanghai, and, pressing his advantage,

the Generalissimo set in train the events which finally won him recognition by the great world powers. Peking was isolated, abandoned to the Japanese, and Chiang Kai-shek set up his new capital at Nanking.

At this dramatic moment Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic. The effect upon Chiang Kai-shek's struggling nationalist government was electric. Lindbergh's flight turned the Generalissimo's thoughts toward the possibilities of aviation. In August, 1927, I was in Canton. I motored out to the improved airdrome where I found a small group of Chinese pilots, most of them trained in America, unpacking five replicas of Lindbergh's *Spirit of St. Louis*. The group was headed by Chang Wei-jung, now air marshal for Chiang Kai-shek, with Art Lum, who held a 1914 pilot's license, General Freddie Wong, Colonel Chow, and a few others. They were busy founding the first flying school in national China.

For more than two years I followed the work of these fledglings of the Dragon, teaching them to fly; and, when I could, joining their expeditions while they introduced the airplane to China by well-tried American methods. They barnstormed throughout the Middle Kingdom, lacking only a brace of wing walkers, or a man who would transfer from one plane to another in mid-air. On week ends, during holidays, in the early morning and late evenings, I flew with Chang Wei-jung and his pilots.

By now Chiang Kai-shek had firmly established his new capital at Nanking, and he asked his air marshal to move fly-

ing activity from Canton to the mid-China city. He was pushing his campaign against the Chinese Communists, and besides, a serious civil war threatened to the north of the Yangtze River. He was in desperate need of American planes. His air marshal told me that the Chinese government must have a large fleet; but, he said, they had been paying far too high a commission. If I would put through the order for them at a more reasonable commission, he would give me the business.

I was faced with a decision. I could not continue to split my interests as I was doing. I must either give up flying or give up business. So I gave up business.

I resigned from the milk company, came back to the United States to make arrangements with an airplane manufacturer, and sold China the first large fleet of American airplanes ever to go to the Orient, twenty bombers of a type used by our navy; planes which, supplemented later by a fleet of U. S. Army bombers, enabled Chiang's government to survive. With the friendship and support of the air marshal, I then became technical aviation adviser to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, a post I held for two years.

Unknowingly, I had been preparing all my life for the moment of the Panchan Lama's appearance on the stage of Far Eastern affairs, which came about as an aftermath to his first sortie from Tibet, when my second guru, Chanti, had been his guide in Hindustan. That journey had brought into the open the struggle between the two great man-gods. The

Panchan Lama, a man of peace, sought only spiritual influence; while the Dalai Lama lusted for power of life and death over his subjects.

The British government, in an attempt to divorce Tibet from China and bring it within the orbit of India, had provided the Dalai Lama with the nucleus of a modern army. They lent him native officers, gave him guns, and made places in their military schools for Tibetan student officers. By the end of 1923 Lhasa was possessed of an efficient army, a radio station, and an unlimited flow of supplies from India.

This Tibetan army soon formed what it called the Young Tibetan Party, which pushed the Dalai Lama, commander in chief of the army, into a corner, and demanded to know whether the Incarnation's sympathies were with or against them. The Dalai Lama saw the power he loved ebbing away, and hastily assured the Young Tibetans that his sympathies lay with them.

Tibet was split into two warring factions. A large proportion of the pious, at least ninety per cent of the population, gathered under the banner of the Panchan Lama to combat the Young Tibetans. When orderly processes failed to curb the army, the religious party waited on the Supreme Incarnation, urging him to lead a huge field army of the faithful in a march upon Lhasa, for the annihilation of the overbearing army and the Young Tibetan Party.

To avoid bloodshed, the Panchan Lama hastened to Peking to appeal to Tibet's political overlords, the Chinese. He made his second sortie from Tibet in 1924, with a retinue of four hundred priests. He hoped that the republic in Peking

would take under advisement the foreign relations of its sovereign province of Tibet, seek precautionary international treaties, and restrict disagreements by parliamentary processes. It was possible, the Incarnation believed, that some peaceful means might be found to avert the stupidity of war.

Peking, however, was more chaotic than Lhasa, and the warlords came and went with alarming frequency. So the Panchan Lama, wise in the ways of the Orient, left without pleading his case. He led his retinue out of Peking, journeying north and west to Lamaist Inner Mongolia, and took up residence in a yellow-walled monastery on the grassy steppes, in Peilingmiao.

Until the Incarnation came to Inner Mongolia, two potent weapons had been allowed to rust. These were Buddhism, with the Panchan Lama as chief god in human form; and the undying Chinese hatred of the Japanese. It would not be accurate to say that Chinese Buddhists believed in the Panchan Lama as the Lord Buddha in human form: but it is true to say that millions of Chinese were afraid *not* to regard him as a veritable Incarnation.

For four years after the arrival of the Panchan Lama in Mongolia, the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles became the center of my travels. I traced a well-beaten path three quarters of the way around it, but found no opportunity to visit it, no time to close my circle, no excuse for cutting down across the ancient caravan route out of China to Urga in Outer Mongolia. So far as I knew, the Incarnation had buried himself alive in his sanctuary.

But the Panchan Lama had been busy. In the Monastery



of a Hundred Miracles many of Chanti's prophecies took shape. The Panchan Lama was hospitable to ideas. Within the courtyard, surrounded by the high walls of sacred yellow, the Monastery was an anthill of activity. The four hundred Tibetan priests, more than a thousand Mongolian monks and acolytes, and a dozen secular princes of Mongolia and their bodyguards, moved back and forth among the scattered buildings. The graceful, upturned eaves of the Chinese-style roofs were silhouetted against the chilly stars. In the main building the deep drone of prayers was punctuated by the tinkling of tiny bells—while from a structure to the left came the clack of a printing press.

In the last building within the courtyard, removed from the muffled hurly-burly, the Panchan Lama sat behind closed doors. The dim glow of electric light shown through the screen of translucent swordfish scales which served as windows. A single high-powered bulb hung naked from the gloom-engulfed rafters. Four thick pillars of red lacquer seemed to cut off the black corners, making an avenue of honor. A silken yellow runner stretched from the entrance to where the Incarnation sat. It was lined with baskets of bright, fresh flowers; chiefly the enormous feathery chrysanthemums of the Orient, and blood-red cockscomb.

Rising to gigantic proportions, three grinning devils loomed against the wall behind the Incarnation. They held writhing arms aloft, and their red mouths shone like sword cuts. Their glistening bodies were painted in electric blues, blacks, and dramatic yellows. These were the converted

spirits of evil who now benevolently guard the gates of Nirvana.

In the room beyond, there was a maze of wires, white clay fittings, and rounded glass. Blue sparks, tinged with yellow and red, ripped through the twilight like celestial lightning. It was the man-god's radio station.

The Panchan Lama, who had been sheltered carefully from any taint of the outside world, not only understood but welcomed modern methods. He made use of every one which would serve his purpose. For six years he published a newspaper and kept his own radio station busy, instituting reforms in Inner Mongolia.

Now, with the Japanese on the march, he stepped into the breach with the spiritual weapon which he had been forging. His followers were nomads who lived in tents and drove their herds across the grassy steppes, following forage and water; poor material, surely, to resist the tempered steel of the Mikado. But the Incarnation turned the seeming weakness of his people into strategic advantage.

"You cannot hope," he warned them, "to defeat Japan with guns; with these things they come prepared to fight. But you can humble them by means of the weapons fate has placed in your hands: space—and emptiness."

So the Panchan Lama stopped Japan in 1931. The Mikado's men marched out in their mustard-colored columns. As the columns pushed forward, the Mongols struck their tents, gathered their flocks, and vanished into the setting sun. The Japanese penetrated the emptiness as far as they

dared; then they retreated. The Panchan Lama had beaten the Imperial Japanese High Command, and he had laid the foundation for the "scorched earth" policy which later stood Chiang Kai-shek in such good stead when the Japanese invaded China proper.

The discovery of a capable ally revitalized Nanking. Without loss of time Chiang Kai-shek dispatched an embassy from Nanking to the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles. The embassy tendered rich gifts to the Incarnation, and requested the presence of His Serenity in Nanking. Insofar as such a thing was possible, the Nanking envoys declared, the Generalissimo wished to confer upon the Panchan Lama rewards and titles.

The Panchan Lama put everyone at his ease by accepting Nanking's invitation without further parley. As to titles and rewards, the man-god asserted, these were trifles which could be discussed later. He did not set a date for his arrival in Nanking. Instead, in Oriental fashion, he sent his cabinet members ahead of him "to make the path smooth." When these Tibetan dignitaries reached Nanking, Japan, by her domination over the Middle Kingdom, had brought Tibet and China together.

For me the wheel had come full circle. While Japanese aggression forged the link which bound China and Tibet together, the coming of the Panchan Lama completed the chain begun by Jowaru and continued by Chanti.

PART THREE

The Panchan Lama=China



# 18

It was through Japan's domination over China that I finally rediscovered Tibet. It was through a third native window, through the eyes and the interpretations of the Panchan Lama, the greatest Incarnation of them all, that I was finally able to piece together the patches which made up the spectacular pattern of the Orient.

It came about through one of my Chinese flying friends, Chen Chi-tang. He was small and wiry, with a crop of uncontrolled black hair. (Mrs. Chen was almost as large as her aviator husband, but she boasted of the beatings he gave her—Chen was an inveterate wife beater.) Chen was spending the Christmas holidays in Shanghai, and he invited my wife and me to Shanghai's fashionable Chinese restaurant in the Far Eastern Hotel to help celebrate his wedding anniversary. Chen assured me that we were to be the only foreigners present, and he blurted out that we must come prepared for a surprise.

At six o'clock on Christmas evening, twenty-four of us gathered in the private dining room. The room was twenty feet square and closed off from the main restaurant by flimsy ten-foot partitions of wood. Squares of purplish-blue glass were let into the upper part of the partition. Along one wall were stiff Chinese chairs, decorated in marble, surrounded by small tables of Oriental hors d'oeuvres—watermelon seeds, cold chicken and pork, bowls of green tea. Three circular tables, each seating eight guests, were set with chopsticks, small porcelain wineglasses, and pewter bowls for condiments and sauces.

The guests included several pilots and their wives and a collection of older men whom I did not know. We sat down to an excellent dinner of over thirty courses, made hilarious with mulled rice wine and Hennessy's Three Star Brandy.

I found myself sitting beside a dapper, slim Oriental whose head was remarkably steady. He was dressed in Chinese style, in blue silk long gown. His face was thin and narrow, and his black hair was neatly brushed back over his well-shaped head. He was swarthy in color, and the only effect of the wine and brandy was a slight flushing over his high cheekbones, and dark eyes that became a trifle bloodshot. He had been introduced to me as Tsu Hai-san.

After the tables were cleared of dinner I made a serious attempt to converse with Tsu Hai-san. We talked of flying—flying over mountains, flying with loads at high altitudes. My companion said that he himself was not a pilot, but he admitted a burning curiosity in the airplane. To specific questions, however, Tsu was noncommittal—though this

fact did not prevent his giving me a thorough cross-examination. I was puzzled.

Presently our host moved over to where we sat. Chen banged on a glass for quiet and spoke to the room at large in a loud voice. "I told you," he announced, "that I had a surprise for you. Well, this is it!" He bowed to me and pointed to Tsu Hai-san. The room fell silent.

Tsu Hai-san, he revealed, was not Chinese, but a Tibetan: the Panchan Lama's number-one envoy to Nanking, whose duty it was to prepare for the Incarnation's forthcoming visit to the Chinese capital. No further explanations were made. The evening slipped away.

Next day Tsu Hai-san, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the cabinet of the Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo, indicated that he would like to pursue his acquaintanceship with me, and came to lunch at my house.

During the ensuing five weeks, before the Panchan Lama reached Nanking, our home at the end of Avenue Joffre in Shanghai's French Town served as Tibetan headquarters for the whole of East Asia. Tsu Hai-san was our most frequent caller, and he often brought with him the Tibetans who were helping him prepare for the visit of the Panchan Lama to Nanking. By Tibetan standards, it was a distinguished company.

Tsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs, followed a double-barreled course of action. He schooled himself in the social graces, doffing his Tibetan robes and learning to wear foreign-styled suits, shirts, hats, and shoes. He mastered the



use of knives, forks, and spoons, and studied the eating habits of the West. He took lessons in English and French to reinforce his already wide knowledge of Chinese and his smattering of Hindustani. With extreme rapidity he absorbed the surface shine of our customs and manners; he became a man about town.

Tsu had an enormous capacity for work, and got along on four hours of sleep. He spent many hours with me, in the study of maps. At his request I translated the maps in terms of altitudes, days of travel, nature of terrain, and weather conditions. Our fingers and pencils ranged from Manchuria to French Indo-China; from Shanghai to Koko Nor to Lhasa; and from the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles to Nanking.

Three of the Tibetans, who frequently accompanied Tsu Hai-san to our house, were also members of the Panchan Lama's cabinet. "Little Chen" (not Chen the aviator) was Minister for Communications. He had learned radio operation at the Chinese-government Nan Yang University, and had served with the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek for three years. He was an expert in the use of secret keys, codes, and ciphers. Chen was a little over five feet tall and was very thin and angular. Although he was a quiet little man, and very clever at his work, he had an extravagant taste in uniforms and usually dressed like a comic-opera field marshal, with shining boots, spurs, and Sam Browne belt. But he was not pompous, and he had a delightful sense of humor.

Another cabinet member who made our home his headquarters was a gigantic priest, Hsia, with hands like boxing

gloves, but somewhat stoop-shouldered from talking with mere six footers. This tremendous Tibetan's appetite was fantastic. His ordinary stint of beer was one full case per day. He was the Panchan's Minister for War. Although big in body, Hsia was quick in his movements and in his thoughts. His position was an anomaly, for his master was the Oriental embodiment of peace, and Hsia neither possessed a single firearm nor commanded a single soldier.

The fourth member of the Panchan's cabinet to become a constant visitor at our home was the most important of all. He was, like, Hsia, a priest. His name was Lo, and he was the Panchan Lama's Prime Minister. Lo was a young man, not yet thirty, tall, well built, thoughtful, and quiet. His robe was the russet one of the priesthood, but of silk instead of wool. His hair was close-cropped, and while he wore no mustache, a small black goatee sprang from his underlip and accentuated the firmness of his jaw. Lo was moderate in his eating and drinking; he was sparing of his talk. He had an effective way of detaching himself from present company when it became hilarious and silly, his big eyes focused on a picture on the wall opposite, and he sat like a graven image. But he was no killjoy. So long as his companions talked sensibly, Lo conversed intelligently and laughed readily. His speech was low and rapid.

Besides these four cabinet ministers, many other Tibetans visited our home at the end of Avenue Joffre. Two or three times a week we had large Tibetan dinner parties, and my wife made them enjoyable by starting out with dishes of diced meat and initiating her guests step by step into the

more complicated uses of knives and forks. Some of the Tibetans brought their womenfolk. After dinner was finished and the men were settled in the drawing room with coffee, Betty took her feminine guests into the bedroom where she amused them for hours by letting them examine her dresses, hold them up against themselves, and discuss prices. By the time the Panchan Lama reached Nanking, we were all good friends.

The Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo journeyed from Peiping to Nanking by a special train, completely upholstered in rich satin of the sacred yellow of Lamaism. A throne and shrine were set up at one end of his living quarters. A body-guard of five hundred troops protected him. Throughout the entire route, at every station there was erected a great bamboo arch of triumph draped in yellow. More than ten million Chinese gathered on platforms and lined the tracks between the two cities. When the Panchan Lama reached Nanking, he was met by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, his staff, and the diplomatic corps.

A week after the Panchan Lama's arrival, Tsu Hai-san and my Tibetan friends returned to Shanghai. On the evening of their return we gave a dinner party for six of them. While Hsia drank bottle after bottle of beer, and Chen kept straightening his uniform, Lo and Tsu Hai-san told me of the honor being paid by Chiang Kai-shek to their master. They reported that the Panchan Lama was domiciled in the Generalissimo's summer bungalow at the foot of Purple

Mountain. But the big news of the day came over the coffee cups, after dinner.

Tsu Hai-san acted as spokesman for the others. They had been ordered by the Panchan Lama, he said, to ask me if I would set a date for an interview with the Incarnation.

To hide my surprise, I fell back on the Oriental tactic of refusing. They asked me again. Twice more I refused, in order to satisfy convention, but I could see by the dismay on their faces that the invitation was genuine and that it came direct from the Panchan Lama. When Tsu Hai-san tendered his invitation for the fourth time, I could accept without assuming any responsibility for the outcome. When I did so, the Tibetans jumped to their feet, chattering excitedly and patting me on the back.

Tsu Hai-san and my Chinese interpreter and I took the morning express from Shanghai for the Chinese capital. Just at dusk of that February evening we reached Nanking. Tsu led us along the crowded platform and asked us to wait near the station exit. It was drizzling outside, and we had to wave away the rickshaws, hacks, and taxis which milled past us. Presently a bright-yellow limousine drew up, and inside it was Tsu Hai-san.

The Panchan Lama's Cadillac was upholstered in yellow satin. The passenger compartment was decorated with cut flowers and was brightly floodlighted from above. Two Tibetan footmen, robed in russet, and belted with Mauser pistols, stood on the running boards, holding on to silver handles attached to the roof of the car.

The automobile was driven by a Mohammedan, Hasan Ali from Chinese Turkestan, who had discarded his fez for a pagodalike woolen hat which tapered to a point a full foot above his head. It was encircled by soft fur ear flaps. His uniform, too, was terra-cotta russet. Beside him sat an equally large Tibetan flunky, his twin so far as dress was concerned.

Hasan Ali took us through the city of Nanking, driving fast and sounding his horn continuously. As we lurched through the labyrinth of the Chaoyang Gate, and beyond the city walls, the night settled dark. After several more sharp turns, Hasan Ali made for a small group of lights in the distance, which surrounded the summer home of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, a bungalow built in the California style. As we stopped at the front door, a large delegation of Lamaist priests, shaven-headed and maroon-robed, came forward to greet us. Some of them wore their yellow helmets, others were bareheaded. All of them had rosaries wrapped about their right wrists. An abbot stepped forward as we dismounted.

"The Venerable Buddha," the abbot apologized, "is changing into ceremonial robes. He was detained overlong at his prayers. Unfortunately, there must be a short wait."

Tsu Hai-san put the spokesman at his ease and asked him to lead us inside. The abbot escorted us to the study of the Chinese Generalissimo. It was furnished in the foreign style by Madam Chiang, who is a Wellesley graduate. Desk, chairs, a bed, and a stove were American products. On the walls were maps of Manchuria, showing the day-by-day advance of the Japanese invaders. As soon as they had seated me be-

side the warm stove, Tsu, my interpreter, and the abbot withdrew, leaving me alone in the room.

The moment the door closed, a horrifying thought struck me. How was I going to meet the Panchan Lama? I hadn't formed the vaguest plan. In a few minutes I was going to face the greatest Incarnation of them all, and I didn't know what to do or say.

The Chinese paid as much as ten thousand dollars for the touch of the Panchan Lama's fingers on their forehead. Supplicants sank to their hands and knees before him and banged their heads nine times on the floor. Ordinary mortals held their hands before their mouths, lest their breath contaminate the Incarnation. These procedures did not fit my case, but I could think of no alternatives.

I still had no plan when a knock came on the door. Tsu Hai-san and a huge, good-natured priest entered. They told me the Venerable Buddha was ready to receive me. Out in the hall my Chinese interpreter, already trembling, took his place on the other side of Tsu and me. We walked around a corridor at the back of the bungalow, and I heard the tinkle of prayer bells and the sighing of *Om Mane Pudme Hum*. Finally we came to a door which swung open at our approach. A russet-robed priest, who had been listening for our coming, flung it open. Tsu Hai-san stumbled out of my way and gave me a gentle push through the doorway. He pushed me again, and I took three strides out into an oblong drawing room furnished in the foreign style.

My three strides had carried me to the middle of the room. I glanced back over my shoulder and realized I was standing

alone. I was afraid to turn my head toward the front. I did it very slowly; and there, on my left, seated on a sofa from Grand Rapids, was the Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo.

Chos'gyi Nyimo, Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo, was fifty-five years of age. He stood about five feet six inches tall; he was sturdy and robust. His salt-and-pepper hair was close-cropped; his face swarthy and lined; but his cheeks were fresh and healthy, his chin firm. Delicate, long-lobed ears constituted the unmistakable mark by which his divine reincarnation was established. The Panchan Lama wore a slender black mustache, long at the corners of his mouth. His teeth were white and regular; his lips full-bodied but not thick.

His eyes were the most remarkable feature of the Incarnation's face. They were of good size and dark brown, pulled in very slightly toward the bridge of his nose. Strong Oriental eyes with an elusive hint of the Tartar in them. Their hallmark was extraordinary intelligence; indeed, true wisdom. Their power lay in their magnetism; they were often hypnotic, always inescapable.

The Panchan Lama was dressed in his ceremonial garments. His robe was of rich brocaded satin, of a glowing burgundy color. It was sleeveless and doubled across his body, flowing from chin to ankle, and secured around the waist with a bright yellow girdle. Underneath this robe he wore a stiff vest of thick white felt, which straightened the shoulder line and projected its wings over the Incarnation's shoulders like epaulets. At his throat was a panel of crimson

silk, embroidered in pure gold, and the same bright adornment gleamed from the instep of his Tibetan boots of thick white felt.

His arms were bare, firm strong arms, muscular from much horseback riding. Around his right wrist was looped a rosary of precious stone, marked at every fifth bead with a smooth wooden seed of some kind. The rosary was heavily tasseled in black and yellow. The Incarnation automatically manipulated his beads during every second of the interview, except when he was actually speaking.

I did not know what to do, so I did nothing. I stood still.

The Incarnation saw that I was embarrassed. His face lighted in a benign smile. He rose from his sofa, walked briskly up to me, extended his right hand. We shook hands like visiting Rotarians, in the center of Madam Chiang's living room. Then the Panchan Lama, in Tibetan fashion, threw a pale-blue silk longevity scarf over my head. He asked me to be seated on the sofa at his right hand. Before he returned to his place, he moved a small table near me, on which were bowls of buttered tea, a plate of Huntley and Palmer biscuits, and a tin of English cigarettes. His Serenity insisted on my lighting a cigarette, for he had learned that I smoked.

When my cigarette was alight and the Incarnation seated beside me, Tsu Hai-san and my interpreter came up. The Tibetan stood stiffly at attention before the Panchan Lama; my man faced me. Both were obviously hypnotized with fear and reverence, especially Tsu, who knew the Incarnation so well. It was the measure of the man-god's power.



Whenever the Panchan's name was spoken, both men bowed low from the waist; it did not matter whether it was in translation or in direct conversation.

The rule is that to the Incarnation belongs the first word. We waited.

His Serenity smiled and inclined his head toward me. Then he turned toward Tsu Hai-san and spoke. His voice was low, almost a whisper; his speech was rapid as a mountain torrent. Tremendous pressure and dynamic energy crackled behind his words; it could be felt. I had hoped to catch a phrase or two, but it was impossible. His language was scholarly and far removed from the coolie vernacular I knew. I found myself tense, hanging on every tone, impatient to understand its meaning. The Incarnation honored me by complimenting my country.

In this way began the most nerve-racking conversation of my life. The Panchan Lama's words went to Tsu in Tibetan, then to my interpreter in Chinese, finally to me in English. The circuit required a full two minutes for completion, the return journey was equally long. That was bad enough. But worse was to come. In reply to the Incarnation's compliment of America, I praised Tibet. His Serenity appeared to feel that such politeness called for gracious response. He lauded America again. I elaborated once more on the greatness of the Forbidden Kingdom. A third time the Panchan Lama complimented America. I was losing the power to think of further praises of Tibet.

The Incarnation, too, was irked. He fidgeted and told

his beads furiously. Then, for the second time within a few minutes, he rescued me. He turned my way, touched me on the forearm. He tried me in Chinese. When I responded, his face relaxed in a smile. The atmosphere was cleared, and compliments for both America and Tibet ceased to be a stumbling block. Both of us said pretty speeches to Tsu and the interpreter as fast as they could handle them. The Panchan Lama and I told our own private conversations. We had both been forced to learn Chinese. We both spoke it badly, but we understood one another perfectly.

The Incarnation spoke first of my Tibetan experience on the Indian border, and I told him of my native teacher, Chanti. The Incarnation told his beads rapidly for a moment. When he next spoke, it was of airplanes, of speeds, loads and altitudes, a familiar echo of Tsu Hai-san's talk. It was apparent that the Panchan had arranged the interview because of my knowledge of aviation.

While we conversed in that modern drawing room, Chanti's words boomed in the cavern of my head. Here was the paradox of Tibet—ideas that crossed forbidden boundaries as easily as eagles; airplanes and polyandry, gasoline and boys buried alive in caves; limousines and gilded images; chauffeurs and priests; prayer wheels, telephones, and buttered tea.

I was warming to the talk when the Panchan Lama interrupted. "Tsu Hai-san here," he extended his left hand toward his rigid Minister for Foreign Affairs, "knows all my plans. He has my authority to describe them to you."

It was the end of the interview. The Incarnation rose from his place. I rejoined Tsu Hai-san and the interpreter. The three of us backed out of the presence.

Before we were through the door, the Panchan Lama stopped us. He walked over to the private shrine which filled the farther end of the room. From its place among the pinpoint butter lamps, His Serenity took down a small bronze image of the deity whose soul inhabited his body. It was an image of the Buddha Amitabha. The Incarnation removed the metal piece from beneath the figurine. He waved to me, and then turned his back, facing the shrine.

The bronze image was hollow, and in the Lamaist view it was dead until a "soul" was sealed within its emptiness. Ordinarily, an insect or other living organism is used to give life to such an image. When rendered vital by an Incarnation, however, into the figure is sealed either a gem, a religious relic, or a pellet of the ashes of a departed Incarnation. With his back toward me, the Panchan Lama sealed life into the image. The man-god put back the metal plate at the bottom of the figurine with foreign sealing wax, and replaced the Buddha in its yellow wooden box. He came down the room, shook hands again, warmly, and held out the small Buddha. "For Mrs. Enders," he said.

I murmured my surprised thanks; the door closed.

# 19

ONE MORNING, ten days after I had returned to Shanghai from my interview with the Panchan Lama, Lo and Tsu Hai-san rang our doorbell. They greeted me with more enthusiasm than the occasion warranted, I thought. They came into the living room, and Tsu dropped a bundle on the divan. Both of them wanted to talk at once. I ordered morning coffee and seated my guests. Tsu could not wait until the coffee came.

He hopped over to his bundle and unwrapped it, calling aloud for Betty. Out of the package came saddle rugs, squares of rare tribute silks, and two gold brocaded bags. Tsu's hands shook when he offered the gifts to Betty. Excitedly he explained that they were from the Panchan Lama in gratitude for Betty's kindness to his people.

The Panchan Lama's Minister for Foreign Affairs held out an official envelope to me. I read my name on the cover and opened it, taking out a large oblong document of handmade

rice paper, white and a foot and a half by two feet in dimensions. In the body of the bright oblong were the bold flowing lines of Chinese writing. They started on the right and were in vertical columns; one read them downward from the top.

I could read "File Number 68," "To Whom It May Concern," "An De-tze, First Born," the last being my name, followed by the usual honorific title. Tsu and Lo explained.

The Panchan Lama had decided to break all historic precedent by appointing a Foreign Devil to the Upper (smaller) House of the Tibetan National Assembly.

The Incarnation, it seemed, had ordered his cabinet ministers to seek a foreigner to serve as technical adviser. Such a foreigner, the man-god specified, must know flying and airplanes, he must be an American, and he must know something of Tibet, if possible.

Why an American? Because His Serenity was mindful of the Tibetan proverb, epitome of Asia's bitter experience: wherever a white man goes, an army follows. The Panchan Lama felt that this would not be true of an American.

The implications of His Serenity's appointment were many. Automatically, it gave me rank in the Tibetan nobility, with the title of General; it gave me one of the twelve seats in the Upper House of the National Assembly and consequently made me a member of the Incarnation's cabinet; it gave me the right of commandeering Tibetan men and animals for my journeys; it permitted me to approach the Incarnation at any time and at any place. Later, I found that it also gave me a privilege which the other cabinet members

did not enjoy. It allowed me to speak to the Panchan Lama on any subject. My constant resort to these privileges was always a source of amusement to the Panchan Lama.

During the preceding weeks of entertaining Tibetans, I had been on trial before the Incarnation's cabinet members. While I drove them about Shanghai, helped them with their banking and official business, I was being tested. My knowledge of Tibet and Hindustan, of China and flying, was being weighed and appraised. But the greatest test of all was my interview with the Incarnation at Nanking. It was the final moment either of acceptance or dismissal. The exact turning point came when the Incarnation interrupted himself, indicated Tsu with his left hand, and gave authority for disclosure of his plans to me.

Jowaru and Chanti had fitted me, better than they knew, for a future none of us had foreseen.

From the moment he sent me his official appointment, the Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo became my third guru. Our friendship grew swiftly. As the Incarnation had made me his adviser with the consent of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the change was made without ceremony. I retained freedom of the Chinese Aviation Bureau offices, and continued my round at the War Office. I was introduced at the Bureau for Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs, and became a more frequent visitor at the Bureau for Foreign Affairs; the chief difference was that now I reported to the Panchan Lama, instead of to the Air Marshal.

For nearly six years I spent many hours monthly alone in

the presence of the Panchan Lama. I saw him in Nanking and Shanghai; at Koko Nor and in the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles; but wherever I saw him, there was little change in the externals. Only once did I see the Panchan Lama in the official robe of his office—at our first interview in the summer home of Chiang Kai-shek. Many times I saw him at public rituals robed in burgundy and cloth of gold, with the bodhisattva crown upon his head. Ordinarily, however, he dressed in Chinese style, in long gowns of bright-yellow silk or russet-colored brocade. Wherever he went, the man-god was always accompanied by his two little "lion dogs."

The story is that when the Lord Buddha meditated in the Indian forest, his feet were bare. When he moved from place to place, the thorns troubled him. The lions of the jungle took pity on the god and thereafter carried him on their backs wherever he went. The two small dogs who constantly accompanied the Panchan Lama were supposed to be lions, capable of changing their size at will. They were Pekinese: the male marked in liver and white was a friendly fellow who became a great pal of mine; the little black and white female was more coy. They were aristocrats of the dog world, square-faced Pekinese palace dogs, their ears long and soft, their tails and legs decorated with long "feathers." They had a special priestly attendant who fed them rice and diced mutton once a day.

As I look back, it occurs to me that on the whole I provided the Panchan Lama with more entertainment than advice. As a matter of fact, I was never an adviser in the

usual sense. One does not say to a man-god, "Do this. Don't do that." One suggests vaguely, comments obliquely. It is a curious role.

Oriental politics operate, in some respects, like a cordial system of blackmail. If Tsu, who had chosen me for the Panchan's cabinet and who was therefore held responsible for my actions, were known to back a certain project, I could not oppose it. My only recourse was to put forward a project of my own which Tsu was expected to forward.

If there are any readers who find this method of co-operation quaintly foreign, one need look no farther than our own politicians for examples of a similar technique.

But if I could not advise, at least I never failed to amuse the Incarnation. I amused him with my Chinese, which was bad enough to be funny. I amused him by sitting at my ease and smoking while I talked to him. I amused him by playing with the "lion dogs." He derived endless entertainment from a democratic attitude which he had never encountered before, and which he liked.

Chos'gyi Nyima, the woodchopper's son turned Incarnation, was a man of human affections. Bound to celibacy, he felt thwarted, one-sided, and incomplete. His natural chivalry toward women was touching. I have seen him push aside a dozen important politicians in order to touch a toothless old grandmother on the forehead. Those who paid him huge sums of money for his benediction were frequently kept waiting while he called little children to him, like a scene from the New Testament. Being a man-god is a lonely destiny. Never did he decline to see a friend of mine, for he



approved friendships and yearned for them. Ironically, because of his exalted position it was impossible for the Panchan Lama to have friendships—except with a Foreign Devil. Whether or not he believed he was a god, he was forced to behave like one.

His human sympathies made the Panchan Lama one of the greatest showmen of all time. Coupled with a crusading spirit of reform, his insight into mass psychology was phenomenal. Time and again I have seen him hold fifteen thousand people spellbound with his deep-voiced Tibetan chant, accompanied by music and punctuated by his dramatic gestures. Adversity had made the Incarnation practical, but it was impossible for him to be shrewd. His philosophy was one of kindness and tolerance, and so he was inclined to forgive, rather than to pay back his opponents in their own coin. He was not hard-boiled enough to be a good executive. He maintained an unequalled discipline amongst his cabinet members while they were in his presence, but in their outside work he gave them chance after chance to retrieve their mistakes.

The Incarnation achieved perfection in making his followers believe that he was indeed a god in human form, but in the easier matter of administration he could sometimes be very lax. This frequently made him the victim both of his cabinet members and of the Nanking government. Often he was deliberately misinformed. Substantial sums of the Incarnation's money were squandered in Shanghai night clubs and cabarets. Time and again the lesser Nanking officials robbed him without mercy before they would carry

out the order of their superiors. If he had been shrewder, he would not have had to be so practical. But he realized the need for money, and uncomplainingly he increased his earnings by making public appearances in the temples and giving private interviews for those of the pious who were wealthy and could pay handsomely.

Nevertheless, there was a dogged streak in the Incarnation. His plans were on the plane of good intent and high ideals—matters little understood by politicians. He confounded many an opponent, overcoming every handicap of pride, expediency, and selfish ambition, by insisting on his point. Between the time Chiang Kai-shek offered him titles and rewards at the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles and the time he arrived in Nanking, many officials were in a panic of fear. They expected the Panchan Lama to ask for armies and huge sums of money. When the man-god brushed these things aside as valueless, most of Chinese officialdom was incredulous. When the Incarnation proposed a plan to the Chinese which was based on spiritual values, they refused to understand him. It required five years to overcome their objections. But the woodchopper's son never gave up the struggle; he was a stubborn Incarnation.

Day after day the Panchan Lama unfolded his great plan to me. Chanti had afforded peepholes into the dark chamber of the East. The Incarnation flung wide the doors, and by the light of his gentle wisdom I came to know the East for what it was, not an extension of the West, but its beginning, part of an inseparable whole. The differences, which had

swelled to the proportions of barriers, had no reality which understanding could not abolish.

I learned the profound truth that the mystery of the East is that there is no mystery. These men and women are like ourselves. There are rascals in the East as there are in the West. There are men of good will everywhere. Variations of custom and habit and diet are the only barriers which stand between us, and these are superficial things.

Japan's dominion over East Asia, the Panchan Lama told me, was a sure portent of war. Although the Sino-Japanese hostilities near Shanghai had been settled, and Chiang Kai-shek had apparently surrendered Manchuria to the Mikado's men, the Tibetan man-god considered the peace only as a temporary truce. He kept strict watch over Japanese plots in China, and was convinced that a renewal of war was inevitable.

The Panchan Lama was not an appeaser; he never permitted any of his intimates to suggest compromise with Japan. He foresaw that he could not prevent the struggle from becoming one of arms, but he left matters of counter-espionage, guns, and soldiers to Chiang Kai-shek. His plan was to strengthen the armies of Chiang Kai-shek by uniting his followers in India, Tibet, and China against aggressive Japan.

Out of his own human wisdom, rather than from any political astuteness, the Panchan Lama put his finger on Japan's weakness, and projected a large plan whereby it could be exploited. So far as I know, his foresight far out-

stripped that of his Chinese overlords. But not until the last great attack of Japan on China, in 1937, was the Tibetan man-god completely vindicated.

In order to unify the peoples of Asia against war, the Panchan Lama had, with sure knowledge of its effect upon the masses, asked the Chinese government for "A New Heart for Asia." This was the Incarnation's phrase, which the Japanese, and later the Germans, were to adapt to their own purposes. His Serenity told the Nanking officials that he desired a new capital city built on the banks of Koko Nor, the Azure Lake, at a point where China, Mongolia, and Tibet came together. It was to be a holy city whence the Incarnation could extend his spiritual influence over the hundreds of millions of Buddhistic-Lamaistic believers of Asia.

Encouraged by the effectiveness of his influence against the Japanese, the Panchan Lama now proposed to use it in binding together the whole of the Orient. He was convinced that war was coming, but he wished his new capital eventually to be the heart of a spiritual empire, dedicated to peace.

With polite smiles the Nanking government approved the scheme for the Incarnation's capital city. They tried to trap their unworldly guest when they asked him where the money was coming from for Koko Nor's running expenses. But the Incarnation had the answer. There was gold in Tibet, he said. When the Chinese asked how he proposed to get this gold out to world markets, His Serenity replied promptly: airplanes. Where men and animals might not safely traverse

fourteen hundred miles of robber-infested back country, loaded with Tibetan gold, an airplane could. Furthermore, the cost was less and the time shorter.

It was largely for this reason, His Serenity told me, that he had added a foreigner to his cabinet. His plan was to exchange Tibetan gold for power plants, road-making machinery, motorcars, and radios. It was his purpose to make his New Heart for Asia accessible to all his people.

With Occidental eagerness for action and impatience with waiting, I was constantly baffled by the man-god's indifference to time. If he must wait years for conditions to be ripe for his projects, the Panchan would tranquilly settle down to wait. In the long reaches of eternity, time had no meaning. If he did not live to carry out his plans, there would be another Incarnation, and another, to carry them out.

While he thought in terms of eternity, the Panchan planned in terms of airplanes which could annihilate time and space. He placidly set his theology in the framework of modern life. He planned the release of Tibet from her age-old shackles by means of the airplane. He confronted Japan's mechanized army with a spiritual weapon, a New Heart for Asia, in whose center—Koko Nor—he built an airdrome!

Paradox upon paradox. And yet, in simple logic, the Panchan's plan provided the answer to the problem that confronted the Orient, an answer in the form of a united front, a single conviction. Today the Japanese are beaten because they cannot meet an idea in the minds of free men. Looking forward, one sees the fate of Hitler and Mussolini in the present dilemma of the Mikado's men.

But when I look back I can see why the Nanking officials permitted the Panchan Lama to build an airdrome at Koko Nor, but never permitted him to use it to bring his gold out of Tibet. They sought to keep his favor, but they feared that gold might build a secular power for the Incarnation which would rival theirs. If they had been keener judges of character, if they had been men of broader vision, China would have been better served.

Today war-torn China is deriving four hundred thousand ounces of gold from Tibet each year. In three years' time it is hoped that this flow of gold will be increased to one million ounces per year. At least double this last figure might have been available to China from the outset of the present war, had the Chinese officials not obstructed the Panchan Lama's plan.

Up to the end, however, the man-god never ceased to study maps and investigate the possibilities of airplanes with me. Although he was thwarted in his lifetime, I am convinced that the Lama's instinct for airplanes was sure. Someday they will open up the Roof of the World in accordance with his vision.

"In my plan for a united Asia," the Panchan Lama told me, "I can see a free and happy Tibet—a Tibet wherein the common folk are not slaves to a cumbersome and top-heavy priesthood." It was his theory that if Tibetans were provided with a healthy internal economy, the overcrowded priesthood would, of itself, thin out.

"Then we will have as priests only those who belong in the priesthood," the Incarnation pointed out. "For the intel-

ligent boys who are unfitted to be priests, commercial pursuits will be provided. Marriage and family life will revive; my country will grow fat and prosper."

To this end the Incarnation sent to the Forbidden Kingdom for dozens of boys and youths. The majority of these he apprenticed at once to carpenters, painters, tinsmiths, tailors, grocers, and money-changers. The better-educated youths were sent to Chinese universities to learn surveying, radio engineering, accounting, and transport. Overlooking no detail, the Panchan Lama even investigated the possibilities of motion pictures, hospitals, schools, medicine, and dentistry with a view to adapting them to Tibetan use and rejuvenation.

Chanti's dream of a new Tibet was beginning to take shape.

## 20

THE GREAT SORROW of the Panchan Lama's life was his quarrel with his subordinate in religion, the Dalai Lama. It was also a serious stumbling block to his vast peace aims for the Far East.

"It is in my mind," the Panchan Lama told me one day at morning court in Chiang Kai-shek's summer residence, "to dispatch a mission of good will and friendship to the Dalai Lama of Lhasa. In this manner, perhaps, I can allay the false rumors which circulate in Nanking."

I was pleased, for the Dalai Lama's propaganda was damaging the Incarnation with the officials of the Chinese government.

I hastened to promise every co-operation, purchased steamer tickets, and procured official British diplomatic passports for the Panchan Lama's embassy. For gifts we bought bolts of silk, rugs, cameras, phonographs, and mantel clocks. The genuinely important missives were cased in lacquered



leather. They included letters from high Chinese officials, a picture album containing portraits of Nanking's notables and depicting the Panchan Lama in Chinese scenes, and—most important of all—there was the Tashilhunpo Incarnation's moving plea for good will and friendship.

The day after the party sailed for India, the Tashilhunpo summoned his cabinet to meet in the Generalissimo's summer home at Nanking. He ordered everything packed up as though in preparation for departure from Nanking. No new plans were to be inaugurated, he said, pending receipt of news from his embassy.

News came by cable that the Dalai Lama rejected the Panchan's peace overtures. The hostile Incarnation of Lhasa accepted the Panchan's gifts, thanked his envoy, and showed him every honor. But there could be no peace, he said, until the Panchan Lama severed his relations with China.

I saw the reaction of the Nanking officials to the bad news. They felt that they had made a mistake in practical politics by backing the wrong Incarnation and alienating the Tibetan faction. They avoided the Panchan Lama. Several times I was tempted to hint to them that the British were rendering the Young Tibetan Party and their Dalai Lama substantial political aid, whereas Nanking had authorized the Panchan Lama to offer them only friendship. But the Incarnation had forbidden his cabinet members to discuss the subject with anyone.

The Panchan Lama remained cheerful. At a cabinet meeting which was held in the already dismantled drawing room

of Chiang Kai-shek's summer home, the man-god again imposed voluntary exile upon himself. He ordered a return to Inner Mongolia and the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles.

Cars and trucks awaited us when we reached the end of the railway, at Powtow. Our hundred-and-fifty-mile drive was hot and fly-infested, the baking steppes shimmered with mirages, vultures wheeled in the sky. But we reached the monastery without mishap. I put up with Tsu Hai-san and Hsia on the stone floor of a barnlike temple building near the radio room. Like the others, I spread my blanket on the floor, ate parched barley, boiled mutton, and drank buttered tea. We lived a simple life, relieved by short, breakneck horseback rides over the plains, and by long sessions in the radio room listening to English broadcasts from Japan and Communist propaganda from Haborovsk.

Our daily cabinet meetings were held before sunup. The Panchan sat on his low throne, while all of us sat cross-legged on woolen mattresses at his feet. After a roundup of the international news we discussed the routine of monastery life. By gradual steps, which were psychologically sound, the Incarnation led his cabinet out of their mental depression. Slowly the atmosphere of hopelessness gave way to one of anticipation. By showing us his grasp of the major factors which influenced his situation, the Incarnation built up confidence in the future.

When good spirits returned to the monastery, the man-god sent his cabinet again into the world. The priestly Prime Minister, Lo, he retained at his side. The rest of us left for

Nanking and Shanghai. Our orders were to push plans as though nothing had occurred, and to stay away from Chinese officialdom unless summoned.

Back in Shanghai, it was six o'clock of a dark December morning. My front doorbell began a violent ringing. I lifted a sleep-filled head from my warm pillow and heard the running footsteps of the house boy. The front door let in a cold blast. Then I heard Tsu Hai-san's insistent voice. He wanted me.

With disheveled hair and heavy eyes, I padded into the drawing room. Tsu was speechless with excitement. He held a newspaper in his hand. He pointed, chokingly, to a small item announcing the death of the Dalai Lama of Lhasa, the one consummation capable of clearing the Tashilhunpo man-god's path.

Within two weeks the Incarnation returned to Nanking. China surpassed herself in honoring the ever-steadfast Panchan Lama. There were more yellow-draped arches than ever before, twenty million pious Chinese lined his route, the Incarnation was invited to become a member of the government's Supreme Council.

Before the Panchan Lama reached Nanking, the Chinese officials initiated grandiose schemes. They mobilized an expeditionary force, seeking to strike in the Tibetan highlands, to destroy the Young Tibetans, and to reinstate the Panchan Lama by force. By making the Incarnation a member of the Supreme Council, Nanking hoped to persuade him to take the field as a leader of troops.

When the Oriental embodiment of peace reached Nanking, however, he put aside honors and took up his residence in an abandoned building of the Chinese Ministry of War. Here, unmindful of the political clamor, the Incarnation set up his shrine and throne in a downstairs reception room. In this place, blue with incense and dim with the light of butter lamps, he began three weeks of prayer, lasting fifteen to sixteen hours a day.

The Incarnation sat cross-legged on his low yellow throne. Flanking him, in two rows along the floor, were sixteen Tibetan monks. The garments of all were a somber russet. Directly in front of the Tashilhunpo man-god was a six-foot post on which were draped faithful copies of the Dalai Lama's robes. An Incarnation's yellow helmet topped it all. The Panchan Lama prayed from the Book of the Dead for the soul of his unforgiving rival in life, his archenemy in politics, his subordinate in religion, supporting the dead Dalai's soul in its passage through the Tibetan's purgatory.

When the cycle of prayers was finished, the Panchan Lama, haggard, thin, and too hoarse to speak, again emerged into the world. From the Nanking officials he accepted his post on the Supreme Council, but he firmly opposed the invasion of Tibet by Chinese soldiers—under any leadership whatever. He was against war and the righting of wrongs by warfare. His goal of a New Heart for Asia had not changed, and he still sought the solution through unity and co-operation. His quiet stubbornness eventually prevented the dispatch of the Chinese expeditionary force to Tibet.

As a member of China's Supreme Council, the Panchan

Lama frequently dined with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and I could see that the latter's political exaltation exerted tremendous pressure upon his judgment. In a small upper room in the old Ministry of War at Nanking, overlooking a quiet garden, he often discussed his dilemma with me. He realized how easy it would be to become realistic and short-sighted, enjoying his temporary political elevation. But he had a sense of history, and he always came back to his conviction that temporary advantages should not be permitted to obstruct worth-while evolution, no matter how far distant in the future.

He enjoyed pointing out to me that in Forbidden Tibet there was none of the rubbish of civilization, as in America. There was no outmoded (but still useful) machinery to be junked, he said, or any financial penalty for being up to date. In the rehabilitation of Tibet, the usual process was to be reversed. First would come the airplane, then motorcars—railroads probably never at all. First, too, would come radio, then telephone; the telegraph probably not at all. He relished having things thus upside down.

As he talked, the Incarnation gestured freely. His hands were deeply callused on the palms and along the fingers, a condition which revealed the fact that the Panchan Lama was immune from poisoning by arsenic. From childhood, each day, the regents had fed the young Incarnation increasing doses of the poison. In order to retain the immunity thus set up, the man-god ate a tablespoonful of arsenic daily. The metal deposits in a hard crust under the skin at the

extremities of arms and legs. Wherever this occurs, the protective calluses form.

The two achievements which seemed most necessary to him were the establishment of easy communications and trade for Tibet. Those were the reasons he had called me into his cabinet. Those were the subjects we discussed, hour upon hour: the building of roads, the linking of communities, the ending of isolation by means of the airplane. Exchanging the gold dust of Tibet for the goods of the West.

He sat talking quietly while I smoked and listened, more as a chela than as an adviser. He was too wise to believe that the attitudes and customs and prejudices of the old in his country could be changed. But he had great hopes for the young.

Education, well planned, could revolutionize the ideas they held in one generation. With training and enlightenment, the young Tibetans would become aware of the world beyond their boundaries, aware that it was *their* world if they would reach out and accept it, would become a part of a united Asia, but an Asia which welcomed and utilized the benefits of Western civilization. For, like Chanti, my third guru saw beyond national boundaries, to an enlightened co-operation of men of many races for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

When he contemplated the future, the Incarnation became less dogmatic and more serious. He never abandoned his dream of a New Heart for Asia, to be achieved by unity and co-operation. Sometimes he doubted that his current

mortal body would live to see the fulfillment. But that was neither here nor there; his soul would return. There was time enough.

While the Incarnation revealed himself to me, he continued his struggle to convince the Chinese that an armed invasion of Tibet would solve none of their problems. In this he received unexpected and unorthodox help from Tibet itself, in the form of a dispatch from Lhasa brought to the Panchan Lama by mounted couriers across the Roof of the World. The dispatch contained the details of the Dalai Lama's death, which put a final period to the lifelong rivalry of the two Incarnations.

As he lay dying, said the report, the Dalai Lama had sat bolt upright on his couch, summoning the regents and the abbots to his bedside.

"It is my prophecy," he told them, "that my next Incarnation will be accomplished in the identical way used by my spirit for its first world return. Let no man gainsay my words. Tremble and obey."

The Panchan Lama waited for me to appreciate the full impact of his recital. Although I had never discussed religion with him, for the first and last time, I allowed myself to venture on forbidden ground.

"Did Your Serenity foresee this event?" I asked.

The Incarnation shot me a shrewd look and smiled again. He answered absolutely nothing.

Before the passing of a single heartbeat I knew that this was the answer I wanted. The flat "yes" of a god would

have been disappointing; the weak "no" of a man would have shattered a spell and a legend. Whether my companion were man or god, silence alone was fitting.

A shadow of disappointment crossed the Incarnation's face. He realized that I did not appreciate the significance of the details he had described.

"You see," he explained patiently, "always the Dalai Lama has stood in the way of a united Tibet, he and his Young Tibetan Party with its political ties with India and its British support.

"Under other circumstances, the regent would have continued the Dalai's role. The new Incarnation would have been a mere hireling of the Young Tibetan Party.

"But the Dalai, by his dying prophecy, has forestalled all this. He has robbed the regent of his most important role—that of discovering the reincarnated baby. He has tied the hands of the Young Tibetan Party.

"Moreover, he had made sure that his reincarnation will be found in Amdo Province, Northeast Tibet. That is not only my own native province, but its people are friendly to me and to China." He paused for a moment. "It means," he concluded, "that the Dalai's last gesture was one of friendship for me."

During the ensuing weeks, official Nanking abandoned its plans for armed intervention in Tibet. The Supreme Council of China became harmonious again. Once more the Incarnation pictured Koko Nor as a bustling crossroad in Asiatic trade. He saw his peoples united, busy, and happy. The blue-



prints, which the Chinese had prepared the previous year for the Incarnation's new capital, were once more spread out on the table around which the Tibetan cabinet met. Liu, shock-headed and hollow-chested, was told to bring his Tibetan newspaper from the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles down to Nanking. Tsu Hai-san was ordered to Koko Nor to supervise the building of the barracks, temples, administration buildings, and airdrome. Hsia, Minister for War, was dispatched to Tientsin to pick up an arsenal of revolvers for the Koko Nor police force, which he was to establish. I was given long lists of materials to be purchased at Shanghai. This renewed activity was made possible by the fact that Chiang Kai-shek's government had agreed to pay the Panchan Lama forty thousand dollars a month.

The funds sent to me were augmented by quantities of Tibetan gold dust and musk. I spent my time equally between selling these Tibetan products and purchasing radio equipment, motorcars, gasoline, and oil. By early summer, Chen, the Incarnation's Radio Minister, had linked the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles with the new capital at Koko Nor, and he came down to Shanghai to set up a private station in an alleyway off Avenue Joffre. As soon as we heard from Tsu Hai-san at Koko Nor, we loaded other radio sets and materials on some American trucks and dispatched them from West China up to the Roof of the World.

As soon as the radio sets reach Tsu Hai-san, he sent them out through the province of Amdo, thus making a network in Tibet itself. To me the results were both dramatic and satisfactory. Chen and I could sit in Avenue Joffre, speaking

to half a dozen monasteries of Northeastern Tibet. Here, on a small scale, was a practical demonstration of the way in which the Incarnation planned to give a new heart to ancient Asia, by uniting it.

The man-god gave his network its first tryout from the city of Hangchow. For the inaugural broadcast he chose a ritual which had not been performed for over a hundred years, and which had never been witnessed outside of the boundaries of strict Lamaism. In his role as the Oriental embodiment of peace and the King of Shambala—the capital city of paradise—the Panchan Lama celebrated the ancient Tibetan ceremonies of *Kalashakra*.

The locale chosen by the Incarnation was the Monastery of King-Ying-Shih—the Temple That Flew Over from India. The time was early morning. Betty and I found the monastery high on a wooded hill, in a grove of monster trees. The scene was not China. It was India and the mountains of the Tibetan border. We walked along the banks of a hurrying mountain stream, through a deep ravine. The bare, overhanging rocks were carved with strange images and Indian inscriptions. It was the Pilgrims' Trail again. Tens of thousands of the pious thronged the crowded way. Somber-robed monks in hundreds shuffled through the multitudes, intent on the Incarnation's business.

The public ceremonies were held in an outdoor courtyard of the temple which accommodated at least twenty thousand worshipers. The Panchan Lama sat on an elevated stone platform, which ran out into the crowd like a Shakespearean stage. He sat cross-legged on his yellow satin throne,

and in front of him was the microphone which carried his voice over China, Japan, and into the fastnesses of Tibet. At his side was a small table whereon rested at least a quarter of a million dollars' worth of jewel-encrusted vessels of gold; his heavy thunderbolt, his thick bell of carved gold, drinking cups, teapots, bowls and platters of gold an inch and a half thick, inlaid with jewels and decorated with carvings.

The *Kalashakra* celebration was a pageant of unparalleled beauty—of color, of movement, of sound. It had life and action. It had its major and minor climaxes, artfully spaced with restful interludes and humor. It held drama through the magnetism of the Tashilhunpo man-god and the deep faith of the pious.

The public ceremonies were planned with an eye to mass movement. Whole regiments and battalions of converts put on bright costumes and fanciful hats to take their vows before the man-god. Armies of praying pilgrims shouted their sacred mantras in unison. The clash of cymbals, the piercing cries of conch shells surged like pounding heart throbs. Armies, multitudes, and hosts of the faithful bent their backs and bowed in thundering time toward the Tashilhunpo man-god.

But the heart of *Kalashakra* did not reveal itself to the public. In the early morning, before dawn; in the late evening, after sunset; then the true ceremonies were disclosed in inner temple rooms and hidden courts. At the Panchan Lama's invitation, Betty and I attended these secret services.

At the foot of a giant gilded Buddha whose head rose eighty feet into the gloom, the Incarnation went through his

antiphonal rituals—twenty monks sitting cross-legged and facing each other in two lines at the foot of the yellow satin throne. Here the Panchan Lama used the valuable golden vessels at his elbow; here he sprinkled the yellow holy rice; here he passed around the human skull, filled with reddened water, resting on a jewel-encrusted base of gold.

No stadium in the world would have been large enough to hold the multitudes who gathered for the tremendous climax of the ceremonies. Inside the big temple where the private rituals were held, not far from the throne of the Incarnation, in the shadow of the colossal Buddha, was a huge umbrella of whitest satin, forty feet in diameter, with fringed and embroidered sides which hung ten feet to the temple floor. On the last day, this umbrella was lifted before the gaze of as many as could crowd into the great hall. That was the climax of the *Kalashakra* ceremony.

Betty and I not only knew the monks who had journeyed from Tibet to prepare the marvel, but we had been permitted to steal a preview of the wonder. We stood at the Incarnation's side when the ceremonial umbrella was lifted. We heard the gasps of surprise and saw the tears of joy. We felt, tangibly, the mystic spell which the event cast over the congregation.

In dead silence, under the eyes of the Panchan Lama, in his finest robes of cloth of gold and bodhisattva crown, the umbrella was slowly drawn away. Disclosed for the first time was the authentic map of Shambala, the capital city of Nirvana—the divine refuge over which the Incarnation

ruled as king. The map lay on the floor of the temple, a great round carpet of colored sand and sculptured yak butter. In the center was the heavenly palace of the Panchan Lama, with broad avenues radiating to the four open gates at the cardinal points of the compass. The smooth sand shone with every color of the rainbow, the delicate lines of yak butter partaking of even brighter shades. The names of all the gods gleamed forth in color, and the guardians of heaven were portrayed in their full majesty. The waves of the sea, clouds, emblems of happiness, and flags gave brilliant mosaic qualities to this unique and kaleidoscopic Shambala.

The crowds fell down and kowtowed before the Incarnation, who sat like a graven image. Those outside shoved and pushed, the temple emptied and filled imperceptibly.

Now the time had come. The awe-stricken crowd had obtained its glimpse of paradise. Ten russet-robed monks, with bright-yellow brooms of dyed grass, filed out from behind the Panchan Lama. With strong, steady sweeps, they obliterated the rainbow map. The *Kalashakra* ceremonies were ended.

# 21

THE TASHILHUNPO man-god emerged into the cosmopolitan world for the last time during the late spring and early summer of 1934 at Shanghai. For two weeks he was the official guest of Mayor Wu Te-chen of Shanghai at the Bureau of Foreign Affairs.

I remained alone on the veranda with him one evening, in the dusk when the bats began to fly and the roar of the city was muffled. The Panchan Lama told me that he had one more duty for me to discharge before he left for the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles. He planned, he said, to take a caravan of two thousand camels into Tibet with him the following spring. For loading onto those camels he desired me to purchase for him twelve American passenger cars and one limousine.

The Panchan Lama asked me to see that they were taken down, wheel by wheel and spring by spring, so that they could be loaded onto his animals. He wanted oil and gas, too,

to be sent with the cars. The cars I eventually packed onto the camels were twelve Chevrolets and one Buick, but they did not reach Tibet until the spring of 1937. I suppose some of them are still running over the hard gravel valleys of Forbidden Tibet.

As we talked, a white-robed priest softly padded out onto the veranda and snapped on the lights. The Incarnation shaded his eyes and ordered the lights put out. I rose to go, but he did not move.

"Your Serenity," I began, "it is now four years since I have visited my country. It is my desire to return to America while you are at the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles. Have I your permission for this journey?"

The Incarnation mused for a moment. "I wish I could accompany you—but it cannot be."

I stood waiting.

"Yes," he said, "you have my permission."

"Thank you, Venerable Buddha," I said, bowing and withdrawing.

The Panchan Lama called after me. "Tell them, when you get to America, all you know of Tibet and its Incarnation."

When the Incarnation made his few remaining public appearances at Shanghai, I accompanied him. As he attended all these functions in strict incognito, I went along as a friend rather than as an adviser. But on one occasion the Japanese disregarded the Panchan Lama's unofficial status, and I was forced to revert to my official standing in his cabinet to rescue him from two gold-braided admirals.

The occasion was the farewell tea dance given for the Panchan Lama by Mayor Wu, just before he departed for Nanking. The man-god sat in the seat of honor, in the center of a table a hundred feet long. The table faced the floor, and the band was on the opposite side of the large room. The small tables of the guests were spread in the two wide wings of the hall. Tsu Hai-san stood just behind the Incarnation's chair, and my table was on the Panchan's right, on the edge of the dance floor.

After tea was cleared away and the dancing began, both Mayor Wu and his aide excused themselves. This left the two sides flanking the Panchan Lama unoccupied. Before anyone knew it, two Japanese admirals had popped into the chairs—one at each elbow of the Incarnation.

When I first saw it, Tsu Hai-san was semaphoring an SOS to me. The act was insolent because there was no medium by which the Japanese could communicate with the Panchan Lama. Furthermore, in Oriental eyes, such public proximity might be understood to imply a truce between the Japanese and the man-god of the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles.

The sea dogs of Japan sat like uncomfortable mummies, looking at the Panchan Lama. His Serenity stared straight ahead. Tsu Hai-san's arms flailed like windmills.

Glancing hurriedly about the room, I saw a friend of mine wandering among the tables with a camera over his shoulder. I dashed after him and commandeered him to take snapshots of the Panchan Lama. He was willing enough, but said he was out of films.

"Never mind that," I told him. "You take pictures until



I tell you to stop!" I hustled him out onto a side balcony near the Panchan Lama's table.

It required only a moment for me to re-enter the room and ask the Incarnation whether he cared to have his photograph taken. With his most brilliant smile, the Panchan Lama said he did. For twenty minutes we took pictures on the balcony. The Incarnation posed with enthusiasm, one eye over his shoulder on the Japanese admirals. My friend grumbled, but kept on clicking his empty camera. I blessed the Panchan Lama, and itched to wring the necks of two Japanese admirals. But at length the Mikado's mariners vanished, and the Panchan Lama rejoined his apologetic host.

That was the last public appearance, in any guise, of the Panchan Lama.

His brush with the Japanese had reminded the Incarnation that his route back to the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles lay through Tientsin and Peking. The thought of traveling through this territory, which was virtually controlled by the Japanese, was distasteful to him, so we chartered a Junkers plane to fly him to his destination from Nanking.

With innumerable small details out of the way, with his New Heart for Asia promisingly started, the Panchan Lama's thoughts turned to Japan. The impertinence of the two Japanese admirals was a genuine disservice to their Mikado, for it brought the Panchan Lama to the realization that he had become too much occupied with side issues.

that the real object of his self-imposed task was to combat the aggressive spirit of Japan in East Asia.

In the Panchan Lama's view, there was danger in regimentation. He was the first to deplore it in Tibet. He had already made concrete plans to dethrone a cumbersome priesthood, and to give the common people of Tibet dignity and opportunity. He considered that Tibet's problems arose from a religious totalitarianism, as the rigid system of caste in India was the outgrowth of religious dictatorship. From the social problems of the common people, in these two countries, he drew a moral. Religion, used as a political tool, often began well but invariably ended on the same level, with totalitarianism.

The Panchan Lama deplored militarism as an end rather than a means. I realize now that he suspected Japanese militarism of being a kind of rival religion of death. I saw the Incarnation make many minor political compromises with the Nanking officials, but I can remember no single instance of his softening toward Japan.

Toward China his attitude remained paternalistic and loyal. The Incarnation's position made it difficult for him to understand the everyday problems which they faced. I am convinced that a man who must parade as a god starts out with a grave disadvantage in politics. If he could have accepted his honors and titles as bribes, he certainly would have won greater co-operation. But in the character of a god, he necessarily stood above these things.

Because he genuinely sought no selfish goal, the Tibetan

man-god was forced to regard China not as the whole, but as only a small part of the whole. I can directly ascribe many of his failures to the fact that his thoughts were too far ahead of the men with whom he dealt.

Nevertheless, the Panchan Lama rendered historic service to China, both politically and spiritually. His stopping of the Japanese advance into Western Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia, in 1931, not only gave Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek a breathing space, but it also taught the Generalissimo and his advisers the uses of their "scorched earth" policies. Moreover, the Incarnation taught the Chinese their need for self-defense through unity. In this he was at one with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. But while the Generalissimo prepared the Chinese army and air force, the Tashilhunpo Incarnation prepared the minds of the Chinese people. With a special wisdom borrowed from the West, and seldom seen in the Orient, he employed newspapers, radios, and pageants to reach his audiences. Then with sure instinct he gave them a rallying cry; a slogan which was easy to remember and which expressed the common man's desire.

While preparing their minds for unity, the Incarnation endlessly warned the Chinese that a struggle to the finish between themselves and Japan was inevitable. I was with him in Nanking when China and Russia signed their 1933 treaty. He made himself temporarily unpopular by telling the politicians and the people that they could not escape so cheaply. The fight with Japan, he told them, was their fight, not Russia's. If they permitted Russia to fight their war against

Japan, he declared, they would find Moscow's price just as high as that of Tokyo.

In the three years that have passed since then, Japanese bombs have unified China, and Europe has shown us the worst kind of total war. I stand firm in my conviction that the woodchopper's son who became a god in human form, with his plan for unity and co-operation, a new heart for the world, provided the only solution that has yet been advanced to cure the situation in which we now find ourselves.

## 22

WHEN I RETURNED to China in 1936, I found the Panchan Lama near the Tibetan city of Jyekundo. It was early summer at Shanghai, but it was still early spring among the Tibetan plateaus. There were snow flurries and frosts at night on the bare brown highlands. The Incarnation's residence was at Raja-Gompa—the Monastery of the King. A little town of flat-roofed mud huts huddled at the foot of the high stone monastery. A clear stream of glacial water flowed below the town, cutting it off from the flat brown plateau to the east. Out on the plain were pitched the hundreds of tents of the Incarnation's caravaneers, drovers, and an army of pious Tibetan pilgrims. The two thousand camels—their loads of American cars, gas, oil, and radio equipment piled before the tents—were tethered among the flats of coarse grass which grew along the edge of the stream. Farther out were between five and six thousand herd of cattle, the potential food of Raja-Gompa and the pilgrims.

The Panchan Lama took up his domicile in a wing of the monastery, overlooking the valley, which was two miles above the level of the sea. Daily cabinet meetings were the rule, and they were largely based upon the news which came over little Chen's radio. China was rapidly uniting against the new threat from Japan, the Young Tibetan Party had dissolved as a result of the Panchan Lama's newspaper and the continuous broadcasts, and the Tashilhunpo man-god was poised for a triumphal return to his native country.

The last obstacle in the way of harmony for all of East Asia had been removed the previous autumn when the Panchan Lama discovered the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in accordance with the latter's deathbed prophecy. Every condition of the Dalai Lama's prediction was met. Before the search was a month old, in a fold of the hills by the margin of a snow-covered and frozen lake, the search party approached the oblong mud hut of a lowly shepherd and gold washer. As the party neared the hut, a cold wind swept suddenly down from the mountains and blew away the snow from the surface of the lake. Reflected in the mirrorlike ice was the hovel. Inside, the seekers found a sturdy Tibetan mother suckling her twenty-two months' old man-child.

In the infant's hands were already etched the two-fold name of Jenrezig, son-in-law of the Lord Buddha. The lobes of his ears were long and aristocratic. The baby had been born on February 28, 1935.

When Lo made a favorable report to his master, the Panchan Lama demanded complete and irrefutable proof. The monks of Jyekundo prepared the great stone hall for the

forthcoming ceremonies. At one end, on a raised platform, they set up the yellow satin throne of the man-god. Before it they placed a table upon which were put several silken banners, three golden bowls, and an iron pen case which had once belonged to the Dalai Lama. The candidate would be confronted with the banners, bowls, and iron pen case. If he were the true Incarnation, he would unhesitatingly reach at once for the pen case, because it was the only article which had been the personal possession of the late Dalai Lama.

Hours before the appointed time, hundreds of monks packed the stone hall, sitting cross-legged on their yak-wool mattresses. A gallery of witnesses crowded the two entrances. Late in the afternoon the torches and butter lamps were lit, and the Panchan Lama entered with his retinue. There was a fanfare of strange Tibetan music while the Incarnation took his place on his yellow satin throne. Without delay the man-god picked up his golden thunderbolt and sacred bell, performing the graceful religious gestures and chanting in his deep voice. At the proper time the monks answered hoarsely from the crowded floor. When the chorus was at its height, a white-robed priest—a moving shaft of light in the somber hall—led in the Tibetan woman. The baby son sat astride her hip.

Amid a sudden deep silence, the babe was lowered onto the yellow-draped table under the eyes of the Panchan Lama. The boy crept around among the bright objects, while his mother hovered near to prevent his falling. The baby investigated each article carefully. Some of the objects he threw upon the floor. Then the child sank back onto his tiny

haunches and yawned prodigiously. He threw his head back and let out a howl which sent cold chills up and down the spines of the assembled monks.

The Tibetan woman made a grab for her son, but he beat her off with his arms. He screamed sleepily. Here was genuine catastrophe—but not quite.

Picking it up swiftly from the stand beside him, the smiling Tashilhunpo Incarnation held out his own golden thunderbolt to the baby. The baby abruptly swallowed his cries and investigated the sparkling object. His fat little arms reached for the thunderbolt. The baby thrust the golden symbol of the Gods into his mouth!

There was no further argument. The Panchan Lama nominated the baby as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the Lamaistic hierarchy. Patents of nobility were taken out for the shepherd and his wife—the parents of the new Incarnation—and they were given permission to return to their mud-and-stone hut. Until the baby's weaning at four years of age, the Panchan Lama said, there would be no change in their lives.

If all goes well, the boy Incarnation will assume his power in 1953.

Immediately after the Jyekundo ceremonies, the Panchan Lama moved to Raja-Gompa and began preparations for his return to Tibet. With ample room on the bare plateau, he gathered his caravan and food cattle. Throughout the winter the number of pilgrims who wished to follow him into Tibet grew, but it was impossible to start the return journey in the cold weather. The Incarnation awaited the coming of spring.

But just as the frost began to leave the ground, Japan struck



in North China. The Mikado announced—with guns, not with prayers—his “New Order for East Asia.”

I returned to Shanghai before the fighting reached that metropolitan city. There were many last-minute details to be attended to. The Panchan Lama needed new batteries for some of his radio sets, spare parts for his Koko Nor motor trucks, and he had asked me to get appropriate gifts for the monasteries which had been kind to him.

The Incarnation had also asked me to arrange for the Tibetan youths who were studying in Shanghai to rejoin him. I gathered up the young apprentices who were left in Shanghai, put them in charge of the older students from the Nan Yang University, and sent them all up toward Raja-Gompa with as many of my purchases as they could manage.

I kept in touch with the Panchan Lama through his radio station off Avenue Joffre, between the Avenue du Roi Albert and Rue Cardinal Mercier. The four-roomed house was utterly bare. Downstairs there was nothing but a dripping tap and an electric meter. Upstairs, in the back room, there was a heavy table laden with wires, tubes, and switches. In the corner was the rolled-up mattresses of the Tibetan operator, one of the youths whom the Panchan Lama had brought down to China four years previously.

Within less than a month's time the fighting moved down to Shanghai. The city rocked to the sound of bursting air bombs, naval artillery, machine guns, and hand grenades. It was no longer possible to forward his purchases to the Panchan Lama. Soon after I radioed first reports of the new

developments, the Incarnation changed his plans. He announced his intention of leaving Raja-Gompa for Lhasa in conformity with prewar arrangements, and asked me to stay on in Shanghai so long as communication with the outside was possible. In order that he might keep in touch with events, he radioed that he was sending down to Shanghai Prime Minister Lo and Tsu Hai-san.

Sino-Japanese hostilities had become so widespread by the time they arrived that there was very little they could do except post themselves on the methods of modern war. At first Tsu and Lo were frightened, but when they saw that the rest of Shanghai took pride in going about its business as though nothing were amiss, they soon became veterans. We usually met at the radio station and followed the progress of the Panchan Lama as he journeyed toward Lhasa. His procession marched on an average of six miles a day along the Tea Caravan Road. My Tibetan friends described how the Incarnation's followers, camels, and beef cattle stretched a whole day's march to the rear. The Incarnation, seated on mule-borne litter of sacred yellow, rode under his ceremonial umbrella at the head of the vast cortege. Like a giant dragon, the procession slowly glided over the high mountain passes, across the valleys, and through the deep gorges. Little Chen kept his portable radio stations stuttering from the line of march, stringing them out behind him in an unbroken chain.

By the first week in September, it became evident that Shanghai would fall to the Japanese. While I had nothing to fear, Tsu Hai-san and Lo would surely be trapped. We radioed to ask the Panchan Lama's permission for their im-

mediate escape. The last message I will ever receive from His Serenity gave the required permission and requested me to see that his radio station was dismantled so that it might not fall into the hands of the Japanese.

That evening, after we had packed up the radio equipment, I performed my last service to the Tashilhunpo Incarnation. I drove Tsu, Lo, and the radio operator to Nanking whence they caught a boat to West China on their journey to rejoin their master. The trip to Nanking gave us some scares, but we got through without mishap. The night was dark, the roads were jammed with war traffic, and the road was slippery with mud. On account of Japanese planes, lights were prohibited. My wartime driving experience in France stood me in good stead.

I said good-by to Lo and Tsu on the riverside at Nanking. They took a British steamer for Chungking, via Hankow and Ichang. Within three weeks' time they were out of China and had overtaken the Panchan Lama and his dragonlike procession. As soon as the news reached me, I returned to America.

Throughout August, September, October, and a part of November, the Incarnation's procession pulled its dragon length steadily toward Lhasa. But riding at the dragon's head, the Panchan Lama began to sicken. His symptoms were those of some slow poison—what it was I do not know, I am sure only that it was not arsenic. Unshaken in his determination to reach Lhasa, the weakening Incarnation journeyed on.

The great caravan crawled to within forty miles, within thirty miles, within twenty miles of Lhasa. Only two short days of marching remained, and the sinking Panchan Lama ordered the march to go on. Then he fell unconscious.

His Serenity was sinking fast when Lo and Tsu Hai-san brought him back to the stone monastery of Jyekundo. The Incarnation was gently carried into the great hall where he had chosen the baby Dalai Lama. His suffering body was laid on a yellow satin couch. The frightened monks gathered around, whispering the universal Lamaistic prayer: *Om Mane Pudme Hum*—Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus. His Serenity's white-robed attendant massaged his throat, from collarbone to chin, to aid the departing spirit. On November 30, 1937, Chos'gyi Nyima, Panchan Rinbochhi of Tashilhunpo, died.

Events which followed the Panchan Lama's death read like a page out of the *Arabian Nights*. On the orders of Lo, the new regent of Tibet, the great gates of the monastery were closed—even to the two thousand monks who inhabit its narrow cells. The monastery courtyard was barred to all but the cabinet ministers and a few acolytes. In one corner, near the huge two-storied stove of the monastery, was a pile of fuel. Day and night, smoke poured from the kitchen door and the bright light of the hot fire pierced the wintry gloom and glowed against the high rock walls of the courtyard.

On the floor above, over the stove, was a strange box of rock and plaster, a kind of kiln as big as an ordinary room.

The giant iron kettle for the making of buttered tea had been removed, and this ponderous stone cubical took its place. It was filled with the coarse salt of Koko Nor, which reached to the very top of the kiln, sinking a little toward the center. Nothing else was visible.

But there was more than salt in the hot kiln. In it was the mortal remains of the Tashilhunpo man-god.

His Serenity's ministers had swathed his lifeless body with bolts of fine, thin silk. After each filmy covering, they had painted the Panchan Lama's form with the heavy lacquer of Ningpo. As each coat was dried, the process was repeated, until the wasted body resumed its lifelike proportions. Under the salt the Incarnation now sat in the cross-legged posture of meditation, his hands lying palm upward in his lap, his head slightly bowed, his magnetic eyes half-closed, his benign face at peace.

As the days passed, the form of the Tashilhunpo Incarnation hardened in the hot salt. At last the cabinet ministers let the fires die down and permitted the kiln to cool.

Last of all, they summoned the gold workers of the Dergé Valley to gild the mummy. Soon a half inch of gold covered the entire Incarnation, the expression of his face and every fold of his robe faithfully simulating life. The Panchan Lama of Tashilhunpo had joined the gallery of golden Tibetan man-gods.

The golden mummy was placed upon a yellow satin litter, underneath a large ceremonial umbrella. Flanked by his cabinet ministers, the golden Panchan Lama was carried out of Jyekundo monastery and through the city. As the litter

moved, a long procession of the pious formed behind it. For a second time the Incarnation took the road toward Lhasa.

For twenty-four months the gilded mummy was taken from place to place, all over the Roof of the World. The effect of these strange wanderings was to enhance immeasurably the influence of the Panchan Lama, even in death. Every Tibetan who worshiped the golden mummy went away to tell his less fortunate fellows how he had seen the Incarnation who preached a New Heart for Asia. After two years of such evangelism, Lo and his colleagues brought the Panchan Lama back to the largest monastery in Lamaism—to Kumbum, in Ambo Province.

Meantime, in China, as the Japanese poured in and overran the eastern part of the republic, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek remembered the words which the Incarnation had uttered in the Monastery of a Hundred Miracles. "You cannot hope to defeat Japan with guns," he had said; "that is what they come prepared to fight with. But you can defeat them with space—with emptiness."

So Chiang Kai-shek inaugurated the "scorched earth" policy. In all history the world has never seen such mass migrations as took place in twentieth-century China when the Japanese attack was at its height. Leaving the seacoast, the Chinese, in their tens of millions, retreated before the Japanese advance. They killed their farm animals, they burned their farm huts among the clumps of bamboos. Taking up their bedding rolls, balancing their babies and young children in baskets hung on carrying poles across their shoulders, followed by their patient women, the men of China moved

west. They trudged toward the forests, plains, and mountains which lie near the Roof of the World.

The high tide of this human flood has now receded somewhat, but the faraway deserted places of China are now more thickly populated than before. In the west are springing up modern industries, universities, hospitals—out of range of Japanese guns, within range of the Panchan Lama's dreams. Many millions of these Chinese pioneers will never return eastward. They will remain to fight Japan's New Order for East Asia with the Panchan Lama's New Heart for Asia.

More powerful in death than in life, the Incarnation is, himself, the New Heart of Asia. In him the pieces of the gigantic Asiatic puzzle come together, fitting perfectly. To Tibet there has come a modicum of harmony. China is more united than ever before in its long history. Most of the Orient is pitted against Japan. Millions of Orientals have kowtowed before the golden form of Chos'gyi Nyima, Panchan Rinbochhi of Tashilhunpo, to pray for the return of peace.

The Incarnation's shrine is in a monastery which towers fourteen stories above a high valley, leaning against a crag of rock. The goal of the pilgrims who come there is the great stone hall, or cathedral, which stretches across the front of the building three stories above the ground. It is a room seventy feet wide by a hundred and fifty feet long, and is dimly lighted by two rows of small square Tibetan windows. On a raised platform at one end of the hall sits the golden mummy of the Panchan Lama. At his feet are three lines of golden butter lamps. The air is fragrant with the incense of his sup-

plicants. Behind his head hang a hundred silken banners brought by the faithful. The Panchan Lama is not an idol; he is neither man nor god—he is something far more powerful, a living idea.















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